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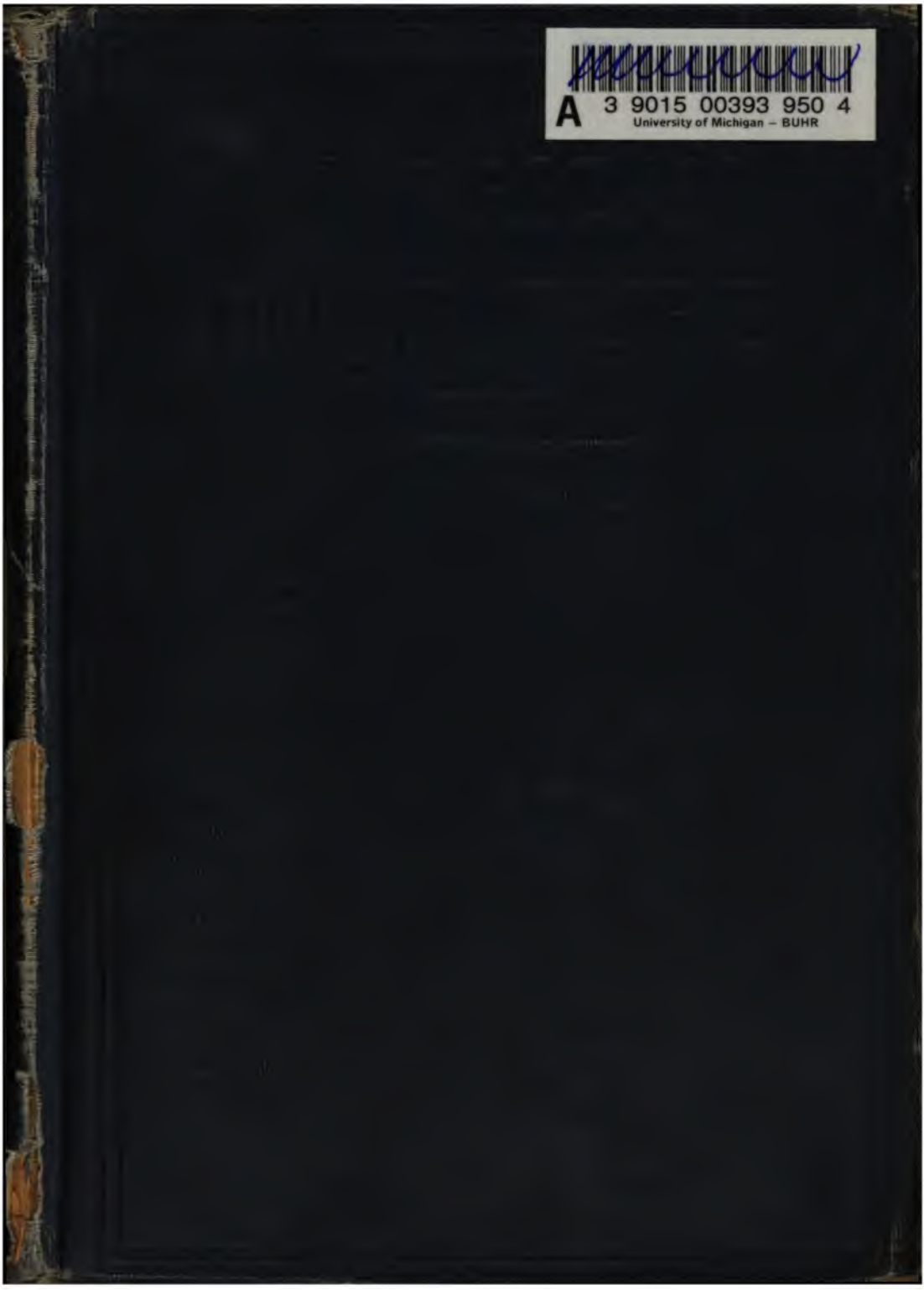
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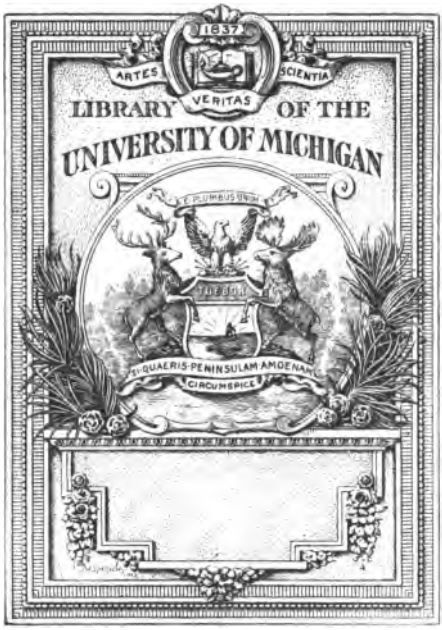
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AMERICAN LITERATURE

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AMERICAN LITERATURE

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B. F. JOHNSON PUBLISHING COMPANY

ATLANTA RICHMOND DALLAS

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PREFACE

In this work an attempt is made to present in a clear and systematic manner the main facts and tendencies in American literature from the beginnings to the present. Special emphasis has been given to movements and individual characteristics which seem distinctively American. We are beginning to realize at last that American literature is not merely an offshoot from English literature, but that it is in a larger and truer sense a record of national traits and strivings for at least a century and a quarter. Even the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, in which no great literature was produced, are exceedingly important as a background for the proper estimate of our later literature and should not be neglected by the serious student of American institutions. These earlier formative periods are also interesting in themselves for the lessons they teach of moral and political aspiration: out of them have sprung the idealism that shines in the pages of American history and that makes worthy our national life of to-day. No one can understand aright this noble heritage without some study of our seventeenth and eighteenth century literature, fragmentary as it is. This conviction will account for the extended treatment of those periods in this book and the numerous illustrative extracts from representative writers.

After the first two periods it would be a difficult task indeed to classify our authors on a uniform national basis. They are all American, of course, but they flourished mainly in groups and by sections; when one attempts to consider them, it is the most natural thing in the world to arrange them geographically according to their development; any other arrangement, it seems to the present writer, would be confusing. What the student has a right to demand in a textbook above everything

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else is clearness of presentation; and the history of literature in a big country like ours, where diversity of interest and tradition only serves to give a spice of variety to our essential national unity, cannot be clearly and truthfully presented except along the lines of its natural growth. This is not sectionalism, but diversified Americanism. The contribution of New England, with its strong moral and didactic flavor; of the Middle States, with their more metropolitan tendencies; of the South, with its romantic sentiment; of the West, with its fresh and vigorous realism;—each of these contributions is set forth as a significant element in our national development. Perhaps the most striking thing in our literary history is the picturesqueness of these several contributions, merging into a larger union of common interests. To lose sight of this characteristic of American literature is to fail to apprehend its deeper meaning.

A fuller treatment of Southern writers is to be found in this work than in other volumes of similar size on American literature. In the last decade or two the recognition of the literary contribution of the South has steadily grown, until the space allotted to the subject has assumed respectable proportions. In recent histories it covers many pages. Even yet, however, we have only imperfectly come to understand the far-reaching consequence in our literary development of the writings of men and women in the South since 1870; while the sterling worth of a few older authors is just now becoming more apparent as we are getting far enough away from the adverse conditions under which they wrote to see things in right perspective. In this account of American literature more space has been given to this group in the conviction that its variety and peculiar quality should have wider recognition.

The same general method of treatment is followed in this work as in the author's English Literature. Each chapter is introduced with a brief discussion of the historical, social, and literary movements which have been most conspicuous in the making of that period or that group. Here, as in the other

volume, a special feature of the estimates of individual authors is a paragraph on the personality of each prominent writer, following the biographical sketch. Since literature is so largely a matter of personality, the stressing of this spiritual factor in the creation of artistic prose and poetry is desirable. But as far as possible the writings themselves must be read and enjoyed. It is assumed of course that a volume of representative selections or separate editions of American classics will be used with this book. For those who wish to read more widely, special reference lists have been provided at the ends of the chapters.

An effort has been made to present the history of American literature in a readable account free from the congestion of unimportant details. As far as the limits of the work have permitted, illustrative extracts have been introduced; especially is this true in the case of authors, as in the Colonial Period, whose works are not generally accessible. The main thing, after all, in a history of literature is such a vital approach to the writers through the setting, the statement of a few salient details in their lives and works, and certain suggestive comments, that the student will eagerly desire to make the further acquaintance of these literary heroes. If the author of this guidebook shall have succeeded in making his readers want to know at first hand what American poets, essayists, and story-tellers have done, he will not have labored in vain.

J. C. M.

Richmond, Va.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS OF A GENERAL NATURE

Literary History and Biography.—Richardson's History of American Literature (Houghton); Wendell's Literary History of America (Scribner); Cairns's History of American Literature (Oxford); Trent's History of American Literature (Appleton); Whitcomb's Chronological Outlines of American Literature (Macmillan); American Men of Letters Series (Houghton); Beacon Biographies (Merrill); Great Writers Series (Scribner); Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography (6 vols.); National Cyclopedia of American Biography (2 vols.); Adams's Dictionary of American Authors; Stedman's Poets of America; Woodberry's America in Literature.

Selections Covering the Field of American Literature.—Stedman & Hutchinson's Library of American Literature (11 vols.); Stedman's American Anthology (Houghton); Carpenter's American Prose (Macmillan); Page's Chief American Poets (Houghton); Bronson's American Poems (Chicago University Press); Long's American Poems (American Book Co.); Simonds's American Song (Putnam); Stevenson's Poems of American History (Houghton); Knowles's Golden Treasury of American Songs and Lyrics (Page).

A stimulating and suggestive little volume is C. Alphonso Smith's What Can Literature Do for Me? (Doubleday, Page & Co.).

References for special periods will be found at the end of each of the chapters.

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AMERICAN LITERATURE

CHAPTER ONE

COLONIAL PERIOD

1607-1765

Englishmen in America.—The first writers of what we now call American literature were Englishmen, temporarily or permanently dwelling in the newer western land. They recorded their adventures and observations for the information of those back in the home country, or for the interest and edification of themselves, their communities, and posterity. These men were not consciously producing literature. Much of what they wrote, indeed, has few of the qualities of pure literature; but on almost every page of their writings one may discover the redeeming traits of vigor and sincerity.

Our earliest writers were primarily men of action: they were conquering the wilderness, founding colonies, and incidentally, as time and occasion permitted, jotting down their impressions. They were belated Elizabethans following in the wake of restless explorers, planting the English flag, and bringing into the New World the political, mental, and moral traditions of an old and famous race. In thought and action they were not essentially different from the men back in old England. We find, therefore, that the books which they wrote in a new land simply reflect the literary ideals of the old, more or less modified by pioneer conditions. And so the first American literature is mainly a continuation of contemporary English literature. The first settlers read English books and naturally modeled their own works after them; indeed, for nearly two hundred years there were few American books

to read. During most of this time, moreover, communication with the mother country was frequent and the affection for her was strong.

English Historical Background.—The settlement of America began in a glorious period of English history, just when the splendors of the great Elizabethans were beginning to wane under the somber influence of Puritanism. The first English explorers had sailed west during the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603). They felt the restless energy of that age of wonderful vitality; they had unbounded intellectual curiosity; they were full of admiration for their sovereign, who, with all her faults, strongly appealed to the popular imagination; they had invincible wills and a sturdy patriotism that made them dare to undertake seemingly impossible things.

The nation was united, and this universal sense of nationality brought courage and hope and joy to the people. There was a feeling of security and prosperity: the troubles with France and Spain had been settled; political and religious plots against Elizabeth, which had long disturbed the peace of the nation, had come to naught; trade and commerce, domestic and foreign, flourished. Above all, the English fleet had in 1588 gained a memorable victory over the dreaded Spanish Armada, an event which united all parties in jubilant thanksgiving. England had at last become a power of the first rank, and she naturally thought of colonizing other lands. Drake sailed around the world, and Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh headed expeditions to the New World. Of all the men of this age, the one who seems to us to-day most representative of its daring and its varied accomplishments is Sir Walter Raleigh, man of action, courtier, and scholar.

The reign of Elizabeth's successor, James I, was not so happy. Indeed, compared with the great Queen, James was a failure; personally he was not popular and his policies were even less so; conceited, dogmatic, obstinate, and with strict views about the divine right of kings, he was soon in trouble.

He quarreled with Parliament, which resented his infringement on the right of freedom of speech, was unsuccessful in his foreign policies, and at last found himself in serious financial difficulties. The quarrel with Parliament went on under his successor, Charles I, until it resulted in the beheading of that monarch in 1649 and the establishment of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, following the Civil War between the Cavaliers, or Royalists, and the Puritans, or Republicans (reformers). Fleeing from the political and religious conflicts of these confused times, many Englishmen emigrated to America and founded colonies there; a more detailed account of these will be given presently.

The historical background, then, of our earliest American literature covers the Elizabethan Age, which marks the beginning of modern English history, the reigns of James I and Charles I, and the brief Commonwealth period, when Puritan influence under Cromwell was predominant. With the passing of the Commonwealth in 1660 came the Restoration, when Charles II, who had been in exile in France, mounted the throne of his ancestors; the Cavaliers came back into their own and the nation experienced a violent reaction from the rigors of Puritanism; there was a plenty of "cakes and ale," and merry England gave herself freely to the joy of living. Meanwhile the colonies in the New World were growing apace. Throughout the next century the great social and political movements in England were reflected in our colonial literature.

English Literary Background.—When Captain John Smith and his men were settling Jamestown in 1607, Shakespeare was writing the last of his great tragedies; when the Pilgrims were landing at Plymouth in 1620, Francis Bacon was finishing his essays and Ben Jonson was producing his comedies of "humours." The same year that Smith wrote his *True Relation* (1608) saw the birth of John Milton; three years later the King James Version of the Bible was given to the world. Thus it will be seen that the men who sailed westward in those early

years of the seventeenth century came out of the golden days of English literature. In London the splendid Elizabethan drama was just beginning to feel the first faint chill of autumn, after the long refulgent summer of the full-blooded playwrights and actors when the welkin was ringing with many voices. Plays and music and songs, the May-pole, the morris-dance, processions of boats on the "silver-streaming Thames," gorgeous pageantry, dreams of fabled strands of gold, stories of marvelous adventures—all these gave youthful zest to life and furnished inspiration and material for the greatest outburst of dramatic activity the world has ever known. Along with this was the gift of song: lyrics of singular freshness and sweetness varied the almost monotonous making of plays, and England was indeed "a nest of singing birds." The prose of the day was touched with this imaginative quality; the long, swinging, sonorous periods, not without a faint undertone of melancholy, are also pleasant to the sensitive ear. It was from such a literature as this that the earliest American writing is in a sense an offshoot.

Then came the soberer literature of the Puritan period, when John Milton brought a sublimer note into poetry and John Bunyan a simpler cadence into prose. *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress* are the highest productions of literary Puritanism. At the same time the "Cavalier Poets" were turning out their tuneful trifles, graceful little lyrics of love. The Restoration brought with it the French influence on English letters, and we find the satire in rhyming couplets and the more exact and polished prose of comedy. John Dryden, poet, essayist, and critic, was the great literary figure of the day. After Dryden came the perfecter of the satire, the master of the couplet, Alexander Pope, maker of brilliant epigrams. In this time of Queen Anne prose literature prevailed; the essay and the periodical became the popular form of expression in a highly social age; Joseph Addison and Richard Steele wrote for a widening circle in the *Spectator* and the

Tatler. The most notable contribution of the eighteenth century, however, was the English novel, which was the beginning of a form of literature more democratic than any other known to the race.

This brief sketch will serve to show how extensive and how varied was the literary background of our own colonial literature. We shall see how closely related in form at least our earlier literature is to that in England; we shall see, too, how difference of subject matter and of environment in the New World gradually brought about a difference of tone and treatment in American writing; and finally, how American literature comes slowly to have a distinctive character.

Colonial Virginia.—The first permanent English settlement in America was made at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. The London Company sent over three small ships containing one hundred and twenty men, more than one half of whom were of good family; the rest were, for the most part, a set of thriftless adventurers. The purpose of their coming was mainly commercial, the hope of enrichment from the gold mines and the abundance of precious stones, which they supposed lay hidden under the virgin soil; incidentally, too, the love of adventure lured them, true Elizabethans that they were. Riches and romance were therefore the impelling motives of these first settlers. To this bold undertaking Michael Drayton, a popular poet of the day, addressed some inspiriting stanzas entitled "To the Virginian Voyage," several of which will serve to show with what roseate hopes the colonists set out on their perilous voyage:

> You brave heroic minds,
> Worthy your country's name,
> That honour still pursue;
> Go and subdue!

Whilst loitering hinds
Lurk here at home with shame.
. . . . . .
And cheerfully at sea,
Success you still entice,
To get the pearl and gold;
And ours to hold
Virginia,
Earth's only Paradise.

Where Nature hath in store
Fowl, venison, and fish;
And the fruitful soil,—
Without your toil,
Three harvests more,
All greater than you wish.
. . . . . .
To whom the Golden Age
Still Nature's laws doth give;
Nor other cares attend,
But them to defend
From winter's rage,
That long there doth not live.

On the banks of the James, named in honor of their king, these first Englishmen built rude huts, cleared the land, explored the region, and dealt with the Indians as best they could. Beset by dangers, reduced by sickness, and discouraged by the hardships of pioneer life for which few of them were prepared, the colonists might have failed had it not been for the ability and the indomitable energy of their leaders, foremost among whom was the brave and gallant Captain John Smith. By 1619, however, the colony had so far prospered that a legislative assembly of representatives from the various plantations met with the governor's council; in 1624 Virginia became a royal province and so remained until the Revolution.

About the middle of the seventeenth century shiploads of immigrants came to join the colonists, seeking refuge from the troubled political conditions at home. In England the king

was quarreling with Parliament, the Royalists and the Puritans were at war, and from the victorious followers of Cromwell the Cavaliers, sympathizers with the royal cause, fled in great numbers to Virginia. To them many of the most influential families in the political and social life of the Old Dominion have belonged by direct descent. These Cavaliers brought with them across the sea the social ideals of rural England and adapted them to their new surroundings; out of these grew the plantation life of the older South, where agriculture was the prevailing form of livelihood. The farms were large, the roads were bad, the towns were few; each plantation accordingly became in time an independent social unit centering about the manor house of the owner, who lived as a feudal lord among his dusky dependants. His tobacco he sent in shiploads to England in exchange for clothing stuffs and provisions; his sons, whose elementary training was at home under tutors, he might send to the English universities.

Old Southern colonial life was pleasant and leisurely. It was a sheltered sort of existence tending toward a conservatism in which the growth of the individual outstripped that of the community. Public schools there were none, for general education was not encouraged by a society which was essentially aristocratic rather than democratic. Governor Berkeley wrote in 1671, over sixty years after the settlement of Jamestown, these remarkable words: "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world, and printing has developed them." This sentiment was not fully representative, however, for by 1681 there was a printing press in Virginia and twelve years later William and Mary College was founded at Williamsburg. The indifference to popular education and culture, together with the isolation of plantation life, naturally made against the writing of books; and so we find in colonial Virginia little literary activity. There was, however, a vital interest

in political discussion, and out of this developed a line of brilliant leaders and accomplished orators.

Colonial Massachusetts.—The second permanent English settlement in America was made at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. The little *Mayflower* brought over about a hundred Pilgrims, who had set out under a grant from the London Company, it being agreed that the settlers should share with the company the profits of their toil. The men who landed at Plymouth belonged for the most part to the sturdy English middle class; a few of them were from the landed gentry of Lincolnshire and adjoining counties. They brought their families, and it was their firm resolve to make the new land their permanent home. Because of their religious beliefs they had suffered persecution in England, for they were Separatists, or extreme Puritans; they had fled to Holland, where they had lived ten or twelve years; now they were seeking an abiding place in the western wilderness with the intention of building up a religious commonwealth. During the next twenty years other Puritans came to join them, fleeing from the intolerance of the Royalists and the partisans of the Established Church in their native land. The triumph of the Puritan cause, the aim of which was to "purify" Church and State, made England temporarily a Commonwealth under Cromwell: there was consequently no further need for the Puritans to emigrate; it was now the Cavaliers' turn to cross the sea.

Thus it will be seen that the first colonists of New England were impelled by a religious motive. They were seeking neither gold nor adventure. Serious-minded men, they were followers of an inner light, loyal to conscience, deeply devoted to principle. They had deliberately broken the old home ties and had set their faces like flint against return. True to their vision, these spiritual idealists, narrow and unromantic as compared with the lively Cavaliers, proceeded with grim determination to carve out a commonwealth. Many of them were well educated men trained in the University of Cambridge,

where there were numerous sympathizers with the reformers, and they brought to the New World the best educational ideals of their time. Along with their Bibles they read the more serious literature of that age. Some of these Puritan fathers even read the Elizabethan romances, for we know that an ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne brought over with him a copy of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. Indeed it is not always easy to draw a clear-cut line between the Puritan and the Cavalier, and we may be certain that in the cultured New Englander there was a blending of the characteristics of the two types.

Believing as they did in books and education, the Massachusetts colonists were not slow to furnish opportunities for enlightenment to their communities. In 1639 a printing press, the first in America, was set up at Cambridge, named in honor of the famous English university town. Three years before, the Reverend John Harvard, a graduate of that same university, had bequeathed half of his estate and his library of three hundred and twenty volumes to the new school established at Cambridge in 1636, which was henceforth to bear his name. In addition to Harvard College the colonists started many grammar schools, so that every boy might be prepared for college or at least have the benefit of an elementary training. Popular education thus became a fixed policy of the young commonwealth; so much importance in fact did the people of New England attach to this, that by 1650 public instruction was compulsory in four of the five colonies.

The social and civic centers of New England life were the church and the town meeting: religiously and politically the community was a democracy. This was a very different sort of existence from that in the South, where, as we have seen, the large plantation was itself a social group cut off from the rest. In New England the people lived close together, built towns, traded with each other, and so became independent of England commercially; they were not an agricultural folk

like their Southern kinsmen. Moreover, the Northern colonist worked with his own hands, while the Southern planter was like a lord on his estate, exercising a general direction through his overseer who had immediate charge of the slaves. This tended, of course, to cause manual labor to be looked upon as degrading and to create sharp class distinctions. The compactness of the Northern community, the democratic atmosphere, the bracing climate, made it a thinking community. Thus a current of fresh ideas was set going and literary production was stimulated.

Colonial Literature.—Colonial literature in America naturally falls into two main divisions, made up respectively of the books written in Virginia and those written in Massachusetts. It is true that there were a few chroniclers in the Middle Colonies, of which Pennsylvania was most representative; it seems best, however, to defer the mention of their names until the next chapter, when the beginnings of Philadelphia's prominence as a literary center will be briefly considered. The Virginia writers dealt for the most part with adventure and exploration, while the Massachusetts writers concerned themselves with community history, theology, and serious verse. Upon the whole, early Virginia literature is romantic in tone, reflecting more clearly the imaginative traits of the Elizabethans; early New England literature is religious and purposeful, showing the workings of the Puritan conscience. In general, it may be said that the literature of the Colonial Period in both sections is mainly prose narrative and exposition; only two poets have any claim to distinction, and they belong to the Northern colony. In Virginia the principal writers were Captain John Smith, William Strachey, George Sandys, Robert Beverley, and Colonel William Byrd; in Massachusetts, William Bradford, John Winthrop, Michael Wigglesworth, Anne Bradstreet, Samuel Sewall, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards.

I. WRITERS IN VIRGINIA

JOHN SMITH (1579-1631)

His Romantic Career.—Captain John Smith was born in Lincolnshire, at Willoughby, not far from the shores of the North Sea. As a boy he heard the "call of the wild," which lured so many Elizabethans away

THE JOHN SMITH STATUE
Jamestown Island

from home, and was off to fight in the Netherlands. From France and the Low Countries he went to Scotland, hoping to win the favor of the king, but failing in this, he returned to Willoughby, where for months he

lived a lonely life in the forest like a banished knight. But he was too much a man of action to remain a hermit long, and so he went back to the continent and plunged into the strenuous life again. His adventures, told by himself, read like a book of romance: he fought in Hungary, was thrown into the Mediterranean by a hostile crew, was picked up by a pirate vessel, shared the booty won in an engagement on the sea, and at last reached Turkey; here he figured in fierce battles with the Turks and in tournaments "to delight the ladies," wherein he showed himself a gallant champion, slaying and beheading three Turks in succession. Finally captured, the doughty Englishman was sent as a slave to a high-born Turkish lady, on whom he made a favorable impression; the romance of the situation, however, was rudely interrupted by the lady's brother. After slaying him, Smith escaped to Russia, whence he returned to England in 1605. He was now only twenty-five or twenty-six years old, but he had won his spurs.

A year and a half later Smith joined Newport's expedition to Virginia. He proved remarkably successful in dealing with the Indians, exploring the country, getting supplies for the little colony, and defending it against the savages. Energetic, fearless, daring, Captain John Smith did more than any one else to save the colony from destruction, beset as it was on all sides by the dangers of the wilderness and disheartened by sickness and want. He remained at Jamestown from 1607 to 1609, then returned to England; in 1614 he made a voyage of exploration along the coast of New England; the next year he led a colonizing expedition to that region, but was captured by French pirates and imprisoned. After his escape a little later, he went back to England where he lived quietly until his death in 1631. He had begun life as an apprentice to a merchant in Willoughby; as a soldier of fortune he had traveled and fought on the continent; most important of all, he had a main part in planting the first permanent English colony in the New World; but strangest of all, when you consider his life of action, his training, and his bluff and burly personality, he wrote books. Captain John Smith was a true Elizabethan.

His Writings.—Smith wrote two books, or pamphlets, in Virginia: *A True Relation of Such Occurrences of Note as hath Happened in Virginia* and *A Map of Virginia, with a Description of the Country, the Commodities, People, Government, and Religion.* The *True Relation* was published in London in 1608, and must therefore have been written in the midst of the author's busy colonizing. It is a booklet of about forty

A TRVE RE-lation of ſuch occur-rences and accidents of noateas hath hapned in Virginia ſince the firſt planting of that Collony, which is now reſident in the South part thereof, till the laſt returne from thence.

Written by Captaine Smith *one of the ſaid Collony, to a worſhipfull* friend of his in England.

LONDON

Printed for *Iohn Tappe*, and are to bee ſolde at the Grey-hound in Paules Church yard by *W.W.*

1608

TITLE-PAGE OF JOHN SMITH'S *TRUE RELATION*

The First Book Written in America

pages on the Indians, the country, the vicissitudes of the colony, and the adventures of the author. The style is what one would expect from an active pioneer, writing down at night by the flickering light of a torch the impressions and noteworthy events of the passing days and weeks—crudely irregular, but at the same time vigorous and picturesque. The *True Relation* is a readable pamphlet, such a news-letter as the people back home would like to get; it has life and energy, and these are literary merits, though its claim to a place in literature is of course mainly due to the fact that it is the first piece of writing done in America. *A Map of Virginia* is chiefly descriptive of the country—the climate, animals, plants, and inhabitants. Smith's account of Indian customs is particularly interesting, for he was a keen observer and a graphic narrator.

After his return to England, Captain John Smith wrote a number of works, the most important being *A Description of New England, New England's Trials, The General History of Virginia,* and an autobiography. In the *General History* occurs the famous Pocahontas incident, which more than anything else has kept the author's name alive in the popular mind. As this rescue is not mentioned in Smith's earlier works, some historians are inclined to reject the romantic story as a later invention inspired by the appearance at the English court of Pocahontas after her marriage with Rolfe, when she had become a "social celebrity." The difficulty of proving this, however, is certainly as great as that involved in frankly accepting the story, probably even greater. For literary purposes it makes little difference whether it happened or not: the one thing that concerns us here is that the Pocahontas episode is the first piece of genuine romance in American literature, and Captain John Smith is responsible for it. He lifted an Indian girl out of oblivion and threw around her the pleasing glamour of an abiding renown. She married an Englishman, visited her husband's country, was presented at court, and became the social wonder of the hour; in her pos-

terity the blood of the red man and that of the pale face mingled.

Smith's books, then, are not simply history, dry chronicles about the planting of a colony; they have here and there literary quality as well, and their author was the first writer to bring the Indian into American literature as a romantic possibility. As he found more leisure for writing after his retirement from pioneer life, his later works, composed amid the peaceful scenes of England, show a marked improvement in style; now and then, indeed, we come across passages which have the melody of the best Elizabethan prose. These later works, however, do not properly belong to American literature; only the two written in Virginia, lacking graces of style, but direct and virile, may be named as the first fruits of colonial authorship, the hasty productions of an explorer who was at the same time a capable organizer and a born leader of men.

William Strachey.—The second name in order of time in the earliest colonial literature is William Strachey, for three years secretary of the Virginia colony. Strachey came over in 1609 with Sir Thomas Gates whose fleet was driven in a storm on the Bermudas and wrecked. The survivors hastily constructed new boats and finally reached Jamestown a year after they had set sail from England. Of this shipwreck and the succeeding struggles Strachey wrote an account in 1610 entitled *A True Repertory of the Wrack and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight, upon and from the Islands of the Bermudas.* This pamphlet is an exceedingly vivid narration of the storm and the experiences of the colonists on Gates's vessels. The main literary interest of Strachey's little book, aside from its value as the account by an eye-witness of a thrilling escape, lies in the possibility of its connection with Shakespeare's *Tempest* as a source of suggestion. The play is thought to have been written in 1611-'12, by which time Strachey's pamphlet must have had a wide circulation in England. It is not improbable, therefore, that the great dramatist read and ap-

propriated the incident of the wreck as a basis for his romantic comedy of life in an enchanted island. This cannot of course be proved, but it is at any rate a matter of interesting speculation. As critics have pointed out, certain passages in *A True Repertory* suggest passages in the *Tempest;* the graphic picture of the storm at its height is not unlike that in the first scenes of the play. Strachey was a man of some literary culture, and his account of the terrible hardships of himself and his companions is one of the liveliest pieces of prose in our early literature.

Poetry: Translation of Ovid; Bacon's Epitaph.—The earliest poetry written in Virginia was a translation of ten books of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by GEORGE SANDYS, treasurer of the colony from 1621 to 1625. Sandys was a man of learning and social prominence with excellent poetic gifts. After the exacting duties of each day, he found time to continue his labor of love in turning the lines of his favorite Roman poet into English verse. Before leaving England he had translated five books of Ovid, and at Jamestown he completed the work, as his friend Michael Drayton, the poet, had exhorted him to do:

> Let see what lines Virginia will produce.
> Go on with Ovid . . .
> Entice the muses thither to repair;
> Entreat them gently; train them to that air:
> For they from hence may thither hap to fly.

It is a good piece of work and belongs with other classic translations of the Elizabethans; later on, it was read and admired by Dryden and Pope, and for many generations it was the standard English version of Ovid. More important still, it is, in the words of Professor Tyler, "the first utterance of the conscious literary spirit articulated in America." That is an impressive picture which the imagination conjures up—George Sandys, the accomplished Englishman, working night after night, by the uncertain light of a blazing pine-knot in his log cabin at Jamestown, on the elegant fables of the fastidious

Latin poet. Here, indeed, was a contrast which the translator himself was not slow to realize, for he speaks of his version as "bred in the new world, whereof it cannot but participate, especially having wars and tumults to bring it to light."

There is one original poem of this early period by an unknown author which has considerable merit. It is an elegy on Nathaniel Bacon, the hero of Bacon's Rebellion, and is found at the end of the *Burwell Papers*, an anonymous manuscript on that patriotic uprising against Governor Berkeley and long in possession of the Burwell family of Virginia. The poem is headed "Bacon's Epitaph, made by his Man." A few lines will serve to show the stately eloquence of this first original poem in our literature:

> Death, why so cruel? What! no other way
> To manifest thy spleen, but thus to slay
> Our hopes of safety; liberty, our all
> Which, through thy tyranny, with him must fall
> To its late chaos? . . . . .
> . . . . . Virginia's foes
> To whom for secret crimes just vengeance owes
> Deserved plagues, dreading their just desert,
> Corrupted death by Paracelsan art
> Him to destroy; whose well-tried courage such
> Their heartless hearts, nor arms nor strength could touch.
> Who now must heal those wounds or stop that blood
> The heathen made, and drew into a flood?
> Who is't must plead our cause? nor trump nor drum
> Nor deputations; these, alas, are dumb
> And cannot speak. Our arms, though ne'er so strong,
> Will want the aid of his commanding tongue,
> Which conquered more than Caesar.

Beverley's History of Virginia.—The first native historian of the Virginia colony was Robert Beverley, clerk of the Council under Governor Andros. After being educated in England, he returned to Virginia to serve the government. In this service he had access to such records as would furnish accurate in-

formation for a history of his native region, which he undertook partly for the purpose of correcting many glaring misstatements in an account of the colonies by an Englishman of the day. Beverley's book, *The History and Present State of Virginia,* was published in London in 1705, a second edition in 1722. The work contains, besides political history, much miscellaneous information on economic and social conditions, and is a readable and trustworthy record of the first century of the colony. The most interesting parts of the book to the modern reader are those which tell of the social customs and pastimes of colonial Virginia. Beverley writes in a clear, sprightly style, which gives a literary flavor to his descriptions.

WILLIAM BYRD (1674-1744)

WILLIAM BYRD

His Varied Activities.— The most versatile and accomplished man of colonial Virginia, according to all reports, was Colonel William Byrd of Westover. He was born in Virginia, educated in England and on the continent, studied law in London, traveled extensively, and later became a member of the Royal Society of Great Britain. He returned to the family estate of Westover on the James River, and there, except for some years as agent of the colony in England, he spent the rest of his life. For more than a generation he was a member of the King's Council in Virginia and for a time its president; he added to his ancestral

estate, entertained in lavish style, took a prominent part in public matters, was a leader in the social and intellectual life of the colony, and collected a library of about four thousand volumes. Among the many solid achievements of this versatile man may be mentioned his work as member of the commission to determine the dividing line between Virginia and North Carolina, his practical interest in certain iron mines, his promotion of immigration to the colonies, and his founding of the city of Richmond. Colonel Byrd belonged to the colonial aristocracy, of which, both by his mental accomplishments and his social charm, he was an ornament; he seems, indeed, to have impressed his contemporaries as a typical Virginia gentleman, admired for his shrewd common sense, his humor, his public spirit, and his pleasing manners.

His Writings.—It is evident from this enumeration of Colonel Byrd's varied activities that he was only incidentally a writer; perhaps no one would be more surprised than he, could he return and look into a history of American literature, to find his name high among the authors of the colonial period. He was a busy man of affairs who wrote for his own amusement and as a matter of record for his friends and country; he would hardly have thought it befitting a "gentleman" to write books for either money or fame. And yet he took pains to have his manuscripts carefully copied and bound into a volume to be preserved in his family. This manuscript volume was not published until 1841, ninety-seven years after his death. The three short works which entitle Byrd to be classed among the beginners of American literature are *A History of the Dividing Line Run in the Year* 1728, *A Journey to the Land of Eden, A. D.* 1733, and *A Progress to the Mines.* The most important of these is the first, which gives an exceedingly graphic account of the early North Carolinians, who afforded the writer endless occasion for humorous comment. The "dividing line" was of course the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina; it ran through the Dismal Swamp, a vivid description of which

occurs in the book. This extract shows Byrd's style at its best:

Since the surveyors had enter'd the Dismal they had laid eyes on no living creature; neither bird nor beast, insect nor reptile came into view. Doubtless the eternal shade that broods over this mighty bog, and hinders the sunbeams from blessing the ground, makes it an uncomfortable habitation for anything that has life. Not so much as a Zealand frog could endure so aguish a situation. It had one beauty, however,

WESTOVER
Home of William Byrd on James River

that delight'd the eye, though at the expense of the other senses: the moisture of the soil preserves a continual verdure, and makes every plant an evergreen, but at the same time the foul damps ascend without ceasing, corrupt the air and render it unfit for respiration. Not even a turkey buzzard will venture to fly over it, no more than the Italian vultures will over the filthy lake Avernus or the birds in the Holy Land over the salt sea where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood.

In these sad circumstances the kindest thing we cou'd do for our suffering friends was to give them a place in the Litany. Our chaplain

for his part did his office, and rubb'd us up with a seasonable sermon. This was quite a new thing to our brethren of North Carolina, who live in a climate where no clergyman can breathe, any more than spiders in Ireland.

The *Journey to the Land of Eden* is an account of a visit to North Carolina, where Byrd had an estate; the ironical title of the pamphlet was inspired by the name of Governor Eden of that colony. The *Progress to the Mines* is especially interesting for the light it throws on the social customs of the Virginia aristocracy of the day; parts of it are as entertaining as a novel. A visit to the "castle" of Colonel Spotswood, Governor of Virginia from 1710 to 1722 and founder of the so-called order of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, is described in a particularly readable entry in the journal:

Here I arriv'd about 3 o'clock, and found only Mrs. Spotswood at home, who receiv'd her old acquaintance with many a gracious smile. I was carry'd into a room elegantly set off with pier glasses, the largest of which came soon after to an odd misfortune. Amongst other favourite animals that cheer'd this lady's solitude, a brace of tame deer ran familiarly about the house, and one of them came to stare at me as a stranger. But unluckily spying his own figure in the glass, he made a spring over the tea table that stood under it, and shatter'd the glass to pieces, and falling back upon the tea table, made a terrible fracas among the china. This exploit was so sudden, and accompany'd with such a noise, that it surpriz'd me, and perfectly frighten'd Mrs. Spotswood. But 'twas worth all the damage to shew the moderation and good humor with which she bore this disaster. In the evening the noble Colo. came home from his mines, who saluted me very civilly; and Mrs. Spotswood's sister, Miss Theky, who had been to meet him *en Cavalier*, was so kind too as to bid me welcome. We talkt over a legend of old storys, supp'd about 9, and then prattl'd with the ladys til 'twas time for a travellour to retire.

The writings of William Byrd reveal decided literary ability, though they were hurriedly composed with apparently no

intention of publication; their author was a man of wide cultivation, a keen observer, and more democratic in his sympathies than most men of his social class. In his common sense and humor and in the ease and directness of his style, he suggests Benjamin Franklin; in charm and urbanity of expression he shows the influence of Addison, with whose works he was of course intimately familiar. In reading the journals of this eighteenth century Virginian, one is particularly struck with the modernness of his style; of all the men of his time, whose writings have been preserved, Byrd seems to the reader of to-day to have expressed himself with the greatest ease and naturalness.

Other Writers in the South.—Worthy of mention, but less noteworthy than those already discussed, are the following writers from Virginia and other Southern colonies: THOMAS WHITAKER, a Cambridge graduate, "the Apostle of Virginia" to the Indians, author of *Good News from Virginia* (1613); HENRY NORWOOD, who wrote an interesting account of his perilous trip across the seas (1641) entitled *A Voyage to Virginia;* JOHN HAMMOND, who wrote with enthusiasm and patriotic pride of Virginia and Maryland as two sisters, *Leah and Rachel* (1656); GEORGE ALSOP, author of a jumble of droll prose and verse, full of satiric descriptions and broad jesting, *A Character of the Province of Maryland* (1666); EBENEZER COOK, who ridicules Maryland in a verse satire of the Hudibras order, *The Sot-Weed Factor, or A Voyage to Maryland,* in which he relates his experiences with tobacco agents ("sot-weed factors"); JOHN LAWSON, author of a readable *History of Carolina* (1714), which, like the other histories of the period, is a medley of narration and description, character-sketches and comments; HUGH JONES, a professor in William and Mary College, who wrote in 1724 *The Present State of Virginia;* JAMES BLAIR, a cultured Scotchman and the first president of William and Mary College, whose sermons have a distinct literary quality; WILLIAM STITH, another president of that institution, who published at Williamsburg in 1747 *The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia;* and PATRICK TAILEFER, who, with the help of two colleagues, published in 1740 *A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia,* a bitter arraignment of Governor Oglethorpe's management of the colony.

II. WRITERS IN MASSACHUSETTS

1. Histories and Diaries

WILLIAM BRADFORD (1588-1657)

His Life and Character.—William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth, came over in the *Mayflower* with the Pilgrims. He had been with them in Holland and had taken a prominent part in the deliberations which resulted in the settlement of the first New England colony. Born in Yorkshire of humble parentage, he had slender opportunities for a liberal education, but he did succeed in gaining some knowledge of the classics; late in life he even set himself the difficult task of learning Hebrew in order that he might read the original tongue of the Old Testament writers. Upon the death of Governor Carver, not long after the landing of the Pilgrims, Bradford was chosen his successor and served the colony for many years as its official head. He was a well poised, industrious, consecrated man, ruling the little Puritan commonwealth with firmness and fairness, inspiring confidence by his strong character, his practical sense, and his piety. He had come with a band of earnest folk to found a religious community, where justice, freedom of conscience, and devotion to spiritual ideals should prevail. Governor Bradford does not appeal to the romantic imagination as does the adventurous Captain John Smith, who some years before had founded Virginia and whose career suggests an Elizabethan romance; but the Puritan governor is nevertheless a striking figure there in the Massachusetts wilderness, and in his struggles, political and religious, he is the hero of a new *Pilgrim's Progress*.

His Writings.—Bradford composed in whole or in part two works. The first of these, a *Journal* of the first thirteen months of the colony, is the joint labor of William Bradford and Edward Winslow, briefly detailing the trying experiences of the settlers during that time. Prefixed to the journal was a note signed "G. Mourt," which for a long time caused the book, through a mistaken notion of its authorship, to be referred to as *Mourt's Relation*. Far more important than this journal of Bradford and Winslow is Bradford's own larger work, the *History of Plymouth Plantation*, written between

1630 and 1646. Here is a good, straightforward piece of writing, conscientiously setting forth the history of the Plymouth colony. It is evident from his use of letters and official papers that the author wished to give an accurate account of the life and achievements of the people of Plymouth. The manuscript remained for many years in the Bradford family, finally coming into possession of the Prince Library in Boston; during the Revolution it disappeared, but was at last discovered (1855) in the library of the Bishop of London, who in 1897 returned it to the State of Massachusetts. It is of course one of the most precious documents in American history.

Bradford's work has few graces of style, but it has a simple dignity which commends it even to the modern reader, so evidently sincere was the writer in his desire to tell the truth. True Puritan that he was, Bradford often digressed to relate what seemed to him "special providences" and to detail with the severity of a Hebrew prophet the evidences of Divine vengeance on the enemies of the Puritans, whether the Indians or the gay Cavaliers back in England. Now and then the solemn elevation of style in certain passages in the *History of Plymouth* shows the influence upon the writer of that strong, simple, and musical Bible prose with which he was so familiar. Here, for instance, are two brief passages,[1] the first on the departure of the Pilgrims from Leyden and the second on the landing at Plymouth:

So they left that goodly and pleasant city, which had been their resting place near twelve years; but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on these things, but lifted up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.

. . . . . .

Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the

[1]The spelling in these passages has been modernized.

perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element . . . And for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that country know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruel and fierce storms, dangerous to travel to known places, much more to search an unknown coast. Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men? And what multitudes there might be of them they knew not. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah, to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes; for which way soever they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weather-beaten face; and the whole country, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hue. If they looked behind them, there was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a main bar and gulf to separate them from all the civil parts of the world . . . What could now sustain them but the spirit of God and his grace? May not and ought not the children of these fathers rightly say: 'Our fathers were Englishmen which came over this great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord and he heard their voice, and looked on their adversity. Let them therefore praise the Lord, because he is good, and his mercies endure forever.'

JOHN WINTHROP (1588-1649)

His Life and Character.—John Winthrop was a man of greater social prominence and better educational training than his fellow governor, William Bradford of the Plymouth colony. Winthrop was born in Suffolk, spent two years at Trinity College, Cambridge, studied law, and before he came to America had already considerable reputation in his profession. He became leader of the company which settled Massachusetts Bay in 1630, and for the rest of his days he was governor of that large and flourishing colony. Early in life he had thought of becoming a minister, but finally turned to the law, though his strong moral nature and his sympathy with the Puritan cause made him a great religious leader as well as a wise executive. He was led by his conscience to cast in his lot with the Puritans; forgetting the things behind, he courageously and uncomplainingly went with his people into the wilderness and founded Massachusetts. Winthrop's letters to his wife reveal a tenderness and beauty of sentiment which would do credit to the heart of the most devoted Cavalier; these letters go a long way, indeed, toward humanizing for us to-day the character of the old Puritan

governor, whom we are too apt to picture in our minds as a stern and forbidding personality, with eyes fixed on the other world to the neglect of the gentler domestic emotions.

His Writings.—On the way over to his new home Winthrop wrote an essay, *A Model of Christian Charity*, which is a plea for unity of spirit and action on the part of the company bound for the New World. It is a little sermon on unselfish brotherly love. The chief work of Governor Winthrop, however, is his *Journal*, which later came to have the more pretentious title, *History of New England*, begun in 1630 and continued until his death in 1649. This journal is a record of the civil, domestic, and religious happenings in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during all those years; sometimes there is the baldest and briefest statement of events, without any scale of values. The death of a cow and a goat from eating too much Indian corn gets a notice of one line; the drowning of the governor's own son at Salem is chronicled with the same brevity. Divine judgments are seen by the devout governor in the sudden deaths of evildoers and in civil and domestic calamities; because of their neglect of religious duties, parents are bereft of their children; many instances of special providence are recorded. Throughout the volume there is a curious mingling of plain common sense and fanaticism, but it is often lighted up by a radiant idealism. The finest utterances in the *History of New England* are those on the true nature of liberty, under the year 1645, forming the report by Winthrop of his own speech before the General Court in defense of certain of his acts as deputy governor.

Winthrop's style, though formally more exact, lacks the charm of Bradford's. One comes upon passages in the Plymouth governor's writings which have a melody like that of Bible prose, bringing the emotions home to the primal things of life; Winthrop is drier, more philosophic, more logical, and on the whole less appealing to the imagination. But why speak of style? The worthy governors were not

literary men, but conscientious historians of the beginnings of religious commonwealths. It is almost impertinent to mention graces of style in connection with the work of pioneers in times that tried men's souls. The wonder of it is that such busy men in such days could have found the time and energy to make extensive records of the social, political, and religious activities of their communities.

Morton and Merry Mount.—By way of contrast to the serious manners of the Puritans, brief mention may be made of Thomas Morton, the Cavalier settler of Merry Mount not far from Plymouth. Morton was a London lawyer who with a lively band of jolly fellows established a plantation and trading-post at Merry Mount (Mount Wollaston); here they set up a May-pole and made merry as they were wont to do in good old England, dancing and singing around the pole with the Indians. It seems, too, that the Englishmen sold rum and firearms to the Indians and traded with them to the hurt of the Plymouth colony. What gave mortal offense to the Puritans, however, was the noisy mirth at Merry Mount; Morton and his hilarious crew were arrested and he was twice transported to England for trial, only to return to live elsewhere in New England, for under English law his offense was not punishable. While in England Morton wrote the *New English Canaan*, satirizing the Puritans, praising the Indians, and extolling in glowing terms the natural beauties and resources of New England. He was an irresponsible, jesting Cavalier, not so bad as his enemies made him out, and his book, though carelessly written, is interesting because it gives a touch of color to an otherwise somber background. Morton and his men have been preserved for us in literature through Hawthorne's attractive little story, "The May-Pole of Merry Mount," which should be read by all who would understand the setting and spirit of this episode in New England history.

SAMUEL SEWALL

SAMUEL SEWALL (1652-1730)

Judge and Man of Affairs.—Although the grandparents of Samuel Sewall were early immigrants to Massachusetts, he was born in England whither his parents had gone on a visit. He graduated at Harvard in 1671 and then proceeded to study for the ministry, but gave up this profession, after a short period of service, to become a business man. By the time Sewall was forty he had become a prominent figure in the political life of the colony, and as a judge of the probate court he took a leading part in the witchcraft trials at Salem. Later on, having become convinced of his mistake in persecuting the poor wretches, he had the courage to make a public confession of his error. In doing this he lost for a time at least the friendship of the Mathers who persisted in maintaining their original opinions about the witches. Throughout his long life Sewall

showed an active interest in the affairs of the community; he served the church and commonwealth as member of committees, of the council, and as chief justice. He was well informed on the educational progress of the time and on the literature brought from the mother country, for as an alumnus of Harvard he felt an intelligent concern for the young college, of which he was for a while the librarian. Of all this his famous *Diary* is an enduring evidence.

The Diary.—The one work which entitles Judge Sewall to lasting remembrance is his voluminous *Diary* covering a period of fifty-six years (1673-1729). Ordinarily, diaries are dreary reading and only two or three in our language deserve to rank as literature. In English literature the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys, that gossipy old navy clerk of the seventeenth century, has long been a classic. An interesting personality, varied experience, and capacity for minute observation are essential to the making of a readable diary. These qualities belonged also to Samuel Sewall, of Massachusetts, who has left us in his *Diary* an intimate personal record as well as a detailed picture of colonial life. It is the only diary of the period—and there were many—which one reads to-day with pleasure. All sorts of trivial personal entries are found: a neighbor has his hair cut, a schoolboy is whipped, a good dinner is eaten, boys are admonished not to play "idle tricks" on April-fools' day, Mrs. Winthrop is presented with half a pound of sugar almonds. Serious matters of Church and State are also set forth with becoming solemnity.

The most entertaining part of the *Diary*, however, is that dealing with Judge Sewall's long courtship of Mrs. Catherine Winthrop. Both had been twice married and had reared families. To the winsome widow her suitor sends or takes sermons, gingerbread, cakes, drinks healths, and talks sweetly and practically; but the wooing is in vain; the obdurate lady says no; and the judge decides to take it philosophically. Here are two or three extracts:

October 24, 1720.—I went in the hackney coach through the Common; stopped at Madam Winthrop's . . . Sarah came to the door with Katie in her arms; but I did not think to take notice of the child. Called her Mistress. I told her, being encouraged by David Jeffries' loving eyes and sweet words, I was come to enquire whether she could find in her heart to leave that house and neighbourhood and dwell with me at the South-end; I think she said softly, Not yet. I told her it did not lie in my lands to keep a coach. If I should, I should be in danger to be brought to keep company with her Neighbour Brooker (he was a little before sent to prison for Debt). Told her I had an antipathy to those who would pretend to give themselves, but nothing of their Estate. I would a proportion of my Estate with myself. And I suppose she would do so. She commended the book I gave her, Dr. Preston, the Church Marriage . . . I said the Time and Tide did circumscribe my visit. She gave me a Dram of Black-Cherry Brandy, and gave me a lump of the sugar that was in it. She wished me a good Journey. I prayed God to keep her, and came away. Had a very pleasant journey to Salem.

Monday, November 7.—My son prayed in the Old Chamber. Our time had been taken up by Son and Daughter Cooper's Visit; so that I only read the 130th and 143rd Psalm. 'Twas on the Account of my Courtship. I went to Mad. Winthrop; found her rocking her little Katie in the Cradle. I excused my coming so late (near Eight). She set me an arm'd Chair and Cushion; and so the Cradle was between her arm'd Chair and mine. Gave her the remnant of my Almonds; she did not eat of them as before; but laid them away; I said I came to enquire whether she had altered her mind since Friday, or remained of the same mind still. She said, Thereabouts. I told her I loved her, and was so fond as to think she loved me: She said she had a great respect for me . . . The Fire was come to one short Brand besides the Block, which Brand was set up on end; at last it fell to pieces, and no Recruit was made. She gave me a Glass of Wine. I think I repeated again I would go home and bewail my Rashness in making more Haste than good Speed. I would endeavour to contain myself, and not go on to solicit her to do that which she could not consent to. Took leave of her. As I came down the steps she bid me have a Care. Treated me Courteously. Told her she had entered the 4th year of her Widowhood . . . Her dress was not so clean as sometime it had been. Jehovah jireh!

Wednesday, November 9.—Dine at Bro. Stoddard's: were so kind as to enquire of me if they should invite Madam Winthrop; I answered No.

2. Poetry

The Puritans cared little for poetry; life was too serious a business to be wasted in courting the muses; besides, men were giving all their energy to conquering the wilderness and regulating their communities. Even in Old England Puritanism had produced little literature; leave out Milton and Bunyan, and you hunt in vain for poets and almost in vain for prose writers of distinction. The Bible, the one book that the Puritans knew intimately, contains much poetry of the highest order, but the New England fathers were too much interested in the letter of Scripture to catch its poetic spirit; they did not conceive of the Bible as great literature as well as a great spiritual guidebook; indeed, the literary value of the Bible is essentially a modern discovery. Such scattered verse as we find in early colonial literature very largely consists of epitaphs, elegies, memorials, and crude attempts to put the Psalms into singable meter, resulting in performances both lugubrious and wooden and not without an element of the grotesque.

The most noteworthy collection of verse is the *Bay Psalm Book*, a metrical version of the Psalms by several Massachusetts ministers whose expressed purpose was to make a literal rendering. They seemed to feel that verse was a sort of necessary evil as a vehicle of religious truth, and they made the translation as literal as possible so as not to offend the consciences of those that wished to "sing in Sion the Lord's songs of prayse according to his own wille." It required considerable argument, indeed, from one of their leading ministers to convince some of the more conscientious members of the churches that there was Scriptural authority for singing Psalms in meeting. The *Bay Psalm Book*, aside from the fact that it is a literary curiosity, is worth remembering as the first book printed in America; it was issued in 1640 from the Cambridge press set up the year before. The following verses from this collection prove how faithful the translators were

to their assertion in the preface that "God's altar needs not our polishings":

O Blessed man, that in th' advice
of wicked doeth not walk;
nor stand in sinners way, nor sit
in chayre of scornfull folk,
But in the law of Jehovah,
is his longing delight:
and in his law doth meditate,
by day and eke by night.

——*From* Psalm I.

Through all the earth their line
is gone forth, and unto
the utmost end of all the world,
their speaches reach also:
A Tabernacle hee
in them pitched for the Sun,
Who Bridegroom like from's chamber goes
glad Giants-race to run.
From heavens utmost end,
his course and compassing;
to ends of it, and from the heat
thereof is hid nothing.

——*From* Psalm XIX.

A comparison of these lines with the sonorous music of the King James version will make it clear that the worthy divines of Massachusetts had little sense for "harmonious numbers."

The casual reader of to-day finds far more entertainment, however, in some of the memorial verses of that time than in the *Bay Psalm Book*. In England it was the day of "fantastic" verse, whether grave or gay, and several of the New England clergy tried their hands at epitaphs and elegies, with results which were no doubt serious enough to the Puritan fathers but which, in a few cases at least, strike the modern reader as little short of ridiculous. Here, for instance, are ten lines from an elegy on the Reverend John Cotton:

A living, breathing Bible; tables where
Both covenants at large engraven were;
Gospel and law in's heart had each its column;
His head an index to the sacred volume;
His very name a title-page; and next
His life a commentary on the text.
O, what a monument of glorious worth,
When, in a new edition, he comes forth,
Without erratas, may we think he'll be
In leaves and covers of eternity!

The epitaph of Reverend Jonathan Mitchell of Cambridge, reads thus:

Here lies the darling of his time,
Mitchell expirëd in his prime;
Was four years short of forty-seven,
Was found full ripe and plucked for heaven.

Another clergyman, Samuel Stone, had his name played upon after death in the following tribute by a brother minister:

A stone more than the Ebenezer famed;
Stone resplendent diamond, right orient named;
A cordial stone, that often cheered hearts
With pleasant wit, with Gospel rich imparts;
Whetstone that edgified th' obtusest mind;
Loadstone, that drew the iron heart unkind.
A pond'rous stone, that would the bottom sound
Of Scripture depths, and bring out Arcan's [1] found.

But in this time of fantastic rhyming and conceit-making, when "mortuary verses," as Lowell calls them, flourished like the leaves of the funeral cypress, there were two writers of verse who merit a special consideration, Anne Bradstreet and Michael Wigglesworth.

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672).—The first writer in American literature to deserve in any true sense the name of poet was

[1] Secret treasures.

Anne Bradstreet, daughter of one governor of Massachusetts and wife of another. She was born in England; later, her father, Thomas Dudley, became the head of the Puritan commonwealth; at the age of sixteen she married Simon Bradstreet, afterwards governor. Mrs. Bradstreet spent most of her life near Andover; she was the mother of eight children; her household and general social duties were heavy and she suffered from ill-health; still, she found time to read far more than most women of the time and, what is still more remarkable, to compose a large amount of verse. She was familiar with the works of the French poet Du Bartas, the verses of the English poet Quarles, the writings of Sir Philip Sidney, and apparently with those of Edmund Spenser. Though born four years before Shakespeare died, it cannot be proved, as some critics have sought to do, that she read the plays of the great dramatist. Mrs. Bradstreet was a refined and intelligent woman whose devout Puritanism did not prevent her attainment of a generous literary culture.

The works of this early New England poetess were published in 1650 in London, whither the manuscript had been taken by her brother-in-law, the Reverend John Woodbridge, without the consent of the author. She was therefore in no wise responsible for the exalted title on this first edition of her poems—*The Tenth Muse lately Sprung up in America.* Her own countrymen evidently liked the title, and among her admirers Mrs. Bradstreet was proudly hailed as "The Tenth Muse." Fulsome words of praise were spoken by such leading men of the colony as Cotton Mather, who called her verses "a monument to her memory beyond the stateliest marbles"; and by President Rogers, of Harvard, who declared himself "sunk in a sea of bliss" and "weltering in delight" while reading them. Posterity has failed to share the enthusiasm of these loyal gentlemen, and the verses of the "Tenth Muse" long ago fell into neglect; the labored figurative speech, the straining after "conceits," and the moralizings of Mrs. Bradstreet's

more ambitious efforts, which greatly edified the Puritan conscience, have no charm for us moderns. The main body of her verse consists of five poems: "The Four Elements," "The Four Humours in Man's Constitution," "The Four Ages of Man," "The Four Seasons of the Year," and "The Four Monarchies." The last of these "quaternions," as they have been mathematically designated, is a metrical paraphrase of Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World.*

When we leave this dreary didactic verse and turn to Mrs. Bradstreet's later poems of a more personal and local nature, we are rewarded. The best of these is "Contemplations," certain stanzas of which show real feeling and a fresh appreciation of country sights and sounds. Here we may discover the faint beginnings of American nature poetry, wherein are reflected the glories of the wildwoods, the gayety of flowers, and the music of birds' songs. One heartily wishes that Anne Bradstreet, talented as she undoubtedly was, had left her moralizing and "grave dignity" to the less gifted and had contented herself with making more stanzas like these:

Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm
Close sate I by a goodly River's side,
Where gliding streams the rocks did overwhelm;
A lonely place, with pleasures dignified.
I once that loved the shady woods so well,
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.

. . . . . .

While musing thus with contemplation fed,
And thousand fancies buzzing in my brain,
The sweet-tongued Philomel[1] percht o'er my head,
And chanted forth a most melodious strain,
Which rapt me so with wonder and delight,
I judged my hearing better than my sight,
And wished me wings with her a while to take my flight.

. . . . . .

The dawning morn with songs thou dost prevent,[2]

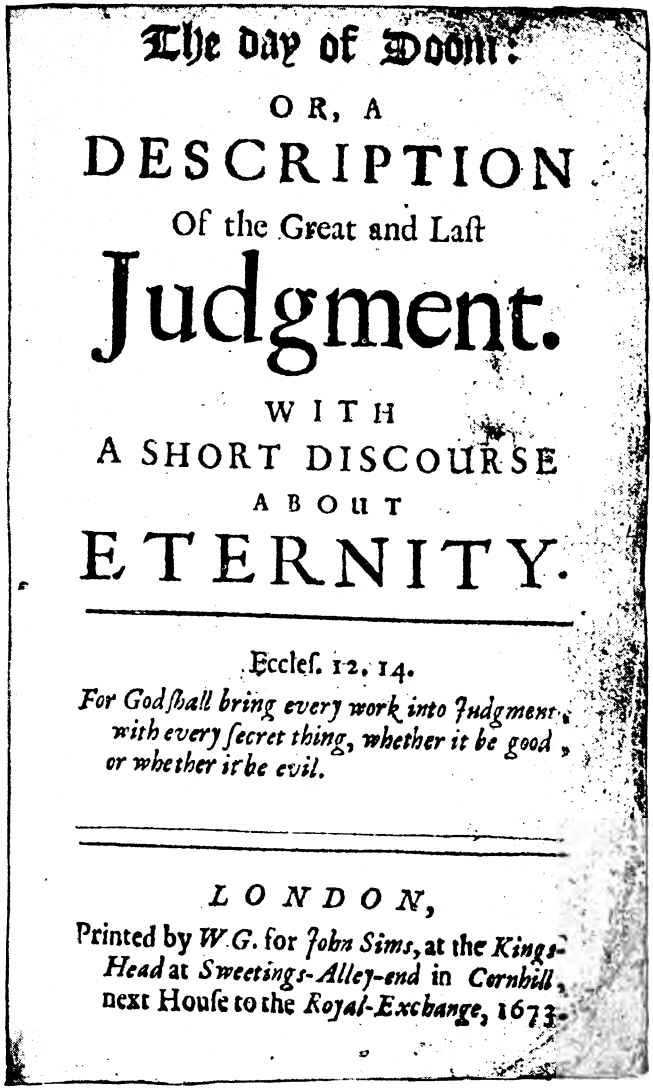
[1]Nightingale. [2]Anticipate.

Sets hundred notes unto thy feathered crew,
So each one tunes his pretty instrument,
And warbling out the old, begin anew;
And thus they pass their youth in summer season,
Then follow thee into a better region,
Where winter's never felt by that sweet airy legion.

Aside from any direct debt to Mrs. Bradstreet for even the best of her verses, Americans of to-day feel an interest in her because of her lineal descendants, Richard Henry Dana, Wendell Phillips, William Ellery Channing, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705).—More strictly typical of New England Puritanism was the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth, minister of the church at Malden, Massachusetts, for fifty years. He was born in England, came to America when a child, graduated at Harvard, where he was for a time a tutor, studied medicine as well as divinity, and so cared for the bodies and the souls of his parishioners. In spite of his exceedingly forbidding theological utterances he appears to have been a gentle, kind-hearted man abounding in good works among his neighbors. Cotton Mather describes him as "a little, feeble shadow of a man"; he suffered much from ill-health, from which he sought relief by writing some of the most cheerless verse in American literature.

Wigglesworth's masterpiece is a poem of over two hundred lines, *The Day of Doom, or a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment.* It is in eight-line stanzas of four and three beats, a jigging sort of ballad meter which appealed to the popular mind, though it must be confessed it is in strange contrast to the gravity of the subject. Still, it was easy to memorize, and as the poem expressed in portable form the gist of the theology of the day, children learned *The Day of Doom* by heart along with their catechisms. Nearly every household in New England owned a volume of Wigglesworth, and it is safe to say that no other versifier of the seventeenth century



The day of Doom:

OR, A

DESCRIPTION

Of the Great and Laſt

Judgment.

WITH

A SHORT DISCOURSE

ABOUT

ETERNITY.

Eccleſ. 12. 14.

For God ſhall bring every work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

LONDON,

Printed by *W. G.* for *John Sims*, at the *Kings-Head* at *Sweetings-Alley-end* in *Cornhill*, next Houſe to the *Royal-Exchange*, 1673.

TITLE-PAGE OF WIGGLESWORTH'S *DAY OF DOOM*
From copy of First Edition in New York Public Library

was so widely and devoutly read. "It was the solace of every fireside," says Lowell, "the flicker of the pine-knots by which it was conned perhaps adding a livelier relish to its premonitions of eternal combustion."

The Day of Doom presents a realistic picture of the last Judgment: the trumpet sounds and the living and the dead appear before the awful Judge of all the earth; the righteous are assigned a place near the Judge, while the wicked from their station on the left hand are allowed to plead for themselves; the heathen who had no opportunity to accept the teachings of the Bible, and a multitude of infants who died at birth present their pleas for exemption from punishment, but in vain; the Judge pronounces doom, and the poem ends with an account of the pains of hell and the joys of heaven. The most famous stanzas are those in which the "reprobate infants" make their plea and receive in response a slightly modified sentence:

O great Creator why was our nature
depravëd and forlorn?
Why so defiled and made so vild,
whilst we were yet unborn?
If it be just, and needs we must
transgressors reckoned be,
Thy Mercy, Lord, to us afford,
which sinners hath set free.

. . . . . .

You sinners are, and such a share
as sinners, may expect;
Such you shall have, for I do save
none but mine own Elect.
Yet to compare your sin with their
who lived a longer time,
I do confess yours is much less,
though every sin's a crime.

A crime it is, therefore in bliss
you may not hope to dwell;
But unto you I shall allow
the easiest room in Hell.

The glorious King, thus answering,
they cease, and plead no longer;
Their Consciences must needs confess
his reasons are the stronger.

Marginal citations from Scripture accompany most of the stanzas, so careful was the author to give an authoritative background to this remarkable production. It is worth noting, however, as Professor Cairns remarks[1], that the "easiest room" concession is not supported by Scriptural reference, "the one expression of the author's better self against the logic of his creed."

3. Theology and Ethics

The New England Clergy.—The preachers were the leaders of thought in early colonial New England. The meeting-house was the center of social and religious activity, uniting within itself and the minister the functions of modern clubs, lectures, and newspapers. The minister in a Puritan commonwealth of the seventeenth century exercised this supreme power not simply because the government was virtually a theocracy, but also because he was usually a man of intellectual ability, strong personality, devout life, and great learning. The New England divines were giants. They gave themselves to their tasks of spiritual and temporal leadership with immense seriousness, and they ruled their communities with the sanctified authority of anointed kings. No such consecrated priesthood in a Protestant commonwealth has elsewhere flourished as that which dominated the thought of Massachusetts for a hundred years after the landing of the Pilgrims. The sermons they preached, while not interesting to this generation, are marvels of mental energy and sustained logical reasoning, to say nothing of the physical endurance which the making of them must have cost. And there was doubtless some

[1]Cairns: *History of American Literature*, p. 53.

physical wear and tear on the hearer as well: sermons were from two to three hours long, highly doctrinal, rhetorical, ponderous, and elaborated sometimes beyond "twenty-fifthly"; through sheer weariness old people would fall asleep, only to be aroused by the sheriff, who also saw to it that the young people smiled not too broadly. The prayers were long, an instance, presumably not uncommon, being recorded by a certain Harvard student: "Mr. Torry stood up and prayed near two hours, but the time obliged him to close, to our regret."

Out of all this religious activity grew a great mass of writing, much of it purely theological; such questions as future punishment, election, total depravity, were debated with a zeal which to our times seems little short of fanatical. It was a very intellectual performance indeed, but it meant a blight on the fancy and a paralysis of the emotions. Life tended under such conditions to become hard and dry. Properly speaking, little of this large body of desiccated divinity is literature, but because it reflects so clearly the temper of Puritan New England in that olden time and because the somber sermonizing is here and there relieved by touches of beauty and outbursts of imaginative splendor, the literary historian must needs take account of it. Old England had her Jeremy Taylor and Thomas Fuller in the same century that New England had her Williams and her Mathers; the latter are not so notable for those qualities of style that make great literature as their brethren of the home land; and yet these pioneer theologians of Massachusetts Bay kindled moral fires which are still burning in their descendants, and their works deserve to be classed among the great spiritual forces that have helped to make our national life and literature. From a long list of writers on theological and ethical themes four may be considered as representative—Roger Williams, Nathaniel Ward, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards.

Roger Williams (1607-1684).—Roger Williams, friend of the Indians and champion of religious toleration, deserves mention

here more because of his personality and liberal teachings than from any striking literary quality in his writings. Born in Wales, educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, with the intention of being a clergyman in the Established Church, he turned non-conformist and in 1631 came to Massachusetts to cast in his lot with the Puritans. For a time he was pastor of the church at Salem, but his preaching proved too radical for the orthodox, and he was accordingly branded as a heretic and banished from the commonwealth. He sought the protection of his friends, the Indians, toward whom he had advocated fairer dealing by the colonists, and in 1636 he founded Providence, Rhode Island, where he spent the rest of a long and noble life.

Freedom in religious thinking, separation of Church and State, just treatment of the Indians through the purchase of their lands,—these were the things for which Roger Williams conspicuously stood in the Puritan commonwealth which rejected him and in the new colony which he founded. His views were far in advance of those of his time, and like all true reformers he suffered for his tolerant spirit and bold speaking; but his ideas have been among the great liberalizing forces in the making of American institutions, civil and religious. His strenuous advocacy of the rights of the individual conscience involved him in a bitter controversy with the Reverend John Cotton, in which, it is freely agreed, Williams had the better of the argument.

His chief work, *The Bloody Tenet of Persecution for the Cause of Conscience*, published in 1644, is a rather tedious dialogue between two controversialists, Peace and Truth, quite in the manner of the seventeenth century religious pamphlet. Now and then, however, one comes across passages not unworthy of comparison with the noble prose of his mighty contemporary, John Milton. Not so commendable, either in form or spirit, is the attack on the leader of the Quakers, *George Fox Digged out of his Burrowes*, whom Williams, contrary to his usual

charitable practice, treated with scant toleration. His interest in the Indians early showed itself in the preparation of his *Key into the Language of America*, designed as a help to missionary work among the savages. The letters of Roger Williams reveal a strong and fearless personality; they are written in a vigorous style, the outward "form and pressure" of a singularly independent mind.

Nathaniel Ward (1578-1652).—In strong contrast to Roger Williams was the Reverend Nathaniel Ward, conservative and satirist. Born in England, educated at Cambridge, lawyer and traveler, Ward became a Puritan minister and sailed for America in 1634 to avoid the persecutions under Laud, that arch-enemy of Puritanism. At Agawam, now Ipswich, in Massachusetts, he was pastor for two or three years, resigning because of ill-health. After compiling a code of laws for the colony and writing a little book, he returned to England in 1647, where he spent the few remaining years of his life.

The volume which has kept Ward's name alive is the greatest literary curiosity of early colonial times: *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawamm, in America. Willing to help 'mend his Native Country, lamentably tattered, both in the upper-Leather and sole, with all the honest stitches he can take. And as willing never to be paid for his work, by Old English wonted pay. It is his trade to patch all the year long, gratis.* This long and whimsical title gives some idea both of the man and his method. *The Simple Cobbler*, like Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* in the nineteenth century, attempts to "patch up" things in general. It was written in the main for the people and government of Great Britain, where it was published in 1647, though touching on American themes and composed in America. The popularity of this queer work is shown by the appearance of four editions in one year. Three themes on which Ward was fond of exercising his vitriolic wit were religious toleration, woman's fashions, and the Irish. To him the time was out of joint: he hated and professed not to understand the phrase "liberty of

conscience"; he thought the women of his day made frights of themselves in following the vanities of fashion; English politics and manners he felt to be thoroughly degenerate. One brief extract will sufficiently illustrate his picturesque and pungent style, his fondness for coining Latinistic adjectives, and make clear to the modern reader why *The Simple Cobbler* was so widely read in its own generation:

I honour the woman that can honour herself with her attire; a good text always deserves a fair margent; I am not much offended, if I see a trim far trimmer than she that wears it; in a word, whatever Christianity or Civility will allow, I can afford with London measure: but when I hear a nugiperous[1] Gentledame inquire what dress the Queen is in this week; what the nudiustertian[2] fashion of the Court; with egge[3] to be in it in all haste, whatever it be; I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cipher, the epitome of Nothing, fitter to be kickt, if she were of a kickable substance, than either honoured or humoured.

From Nathaniel Ward, the most eccentric and satirical of the New England clergy, aggressively bigoted, though regarding himself as a reformer, we may pass to the consideration of two thoroughly representative figures in the realms of theology and ethics, Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards.

COTTON MATHER (1663-1728)

A Famous Family.—The Mather family, sometimes called the "Mather Dynasty," was notably influential in the religious, educational, and political affairs of seventeenth century New England. Richard Mather, the first of the tribe, came to Massachusetts in 1635; he was an Oxford graduate, learned and zealous, and one of the authors of the *Bay Psalm Book*, already mentioned. His son, Increase Mather, was pastor of the North Church in Boston, President of Harvard, agent of the colony in England for a while, and author of about one hundred and fifty books and pamphlets, including sermons.

[1]Frivolous, or silly. [2]Newest. [3]Impulse.

COTTON MATHER

By his marriage with the daughter of John Cotton, the most prominent minister of the first three decades of colonial history, two leading families were united. Mather's life is virtually an epitome of the history of Massachusetts for over thirty years, and the waning fortunes of extreme Puritanism found in him, as in his distinguished son, a valiant but losing defender.

Cotton Mather was the last and, in popular reputation, the greatest of the "Mather Dynasty." A wonderfully precocious child, he was prepared to enter Harvard College at eleven, graduating at fifteen; by the time he was seventeen he was an active preacher. He became his father's assistant at the North Church, and for years father and son worked side by side as the two most intellectual forces in the colony. A Puritan of the Puritans, Cotton Mather lived a life of ascetic severity, subjecting his body and spirit to the most rigid discipline and

working with fanatical devotion at his tasks. His learning was extensive and his memory remarkably retentive, so that he made pedantic use of the seven languages at his command. There is something almost pathetic about his struggle to bolster up the old Puritan orthodoxy in the face of a steadily advancing liberalism which seemed to him destructive of divine foundations. Troubles came thick upon him: his ambition to be president of Harvard was not gratified; enemies attacked him and friends deserted him because of his participation in the witchcraft madness at Salem; his children died one after another, one son was a profligate, and one of his three wives became insane. And yet so great was his egotism, so intolerant his manners, so recalcitrant his temper, that posterity, while admiring his intellectual greatness, has had few words of praise for his strong though somewhat unlovely personality.

The Magnalia.—That Cotton Mather was a prodigious worker is proved by the fact that he wrote as many as four hundred books, small and great. Of this respectable library one work may be regarded as the author's masterpiece: *Magnalia Christi Americana, or Ecclesiastical History of New England, from its First Planting in the year* 1620, *unto the year of our Lord,* 1698. This huge work of over a thousand pages is divided into seven parts, treating respectively the discovery and settlement of the new land, the lives of the New England governors, the lives of distinguished ministers, the history of Harvard College, an account of the churches, a record of "many wonderful providences," and a recital of the "manifold afflictions and disturbances of the churches in New England" entitled "The Wars of the Lord." The *Magnalia,* as will readily be guessed, is a medley, a voluminous history of things in general. The ecclesiastical interests of the commonwealth receive the main emphasis, but in a theocratic government such as the writer held the Puritan state to be, all matters were regarded as fundamentally religious, or at least ethical.

The work has been called the "prose epic of New England

Puritanism," and so it is; it is, moreover, the last elaborate plea for the old order, which, as Mather sadly and even indignantly perceived, was weakening with the new generation at the dawn of another century; it is the final summary and defense of the faith and deeds of the Puritan fathers. The style is artificial and pedantic, except when the writer now and then gives an account of some bit of local history, forgets his learning, and in the warmth of his emotion becomes human and concrete. The book was published in London in 1702; by that time, largely through the influence of Bunyan and Dryden, a simpler style had come into English literature; and after Cotton Mather, a more natural form of expression was destined to take the place of the fantastic and pompous prose of our early seventeenth century writers.

To the modern reader, whom pages bristling with classical quotations seriously annoy, the passages in the *Magnalia* on witchcraft and a few others in a direct narrative style will most appeal. With all its defects, this great work holds a secure place as a mine of valuable, though by no means exact, information on colonial life and thought. Another book by Cotton Mather, commonly known as *Essays to Do Good*, reveals the more practical side of his nature. This might be inferred from the praise bestowed on it by Benjamin Franklin, who told Mather's son that he had derived great benefit from it in his youth; readers of Franklin's *Autobiography* will recall the mention of *Essays to Do Good* among the books which helped that systematic young printer. It is an interesting matter for speculation, indeed, how the confession of an obligation from so utilitarian a man as Franklin to a book of such professedly spiritual purpose as Mather's, would have affected the last of the great Puritan divines. But the times had changed, and the practical philosopher was the embodiment of a different attitude of mind. Meantime another great preacher had arisen, and his name was Jonathan Edwards.

JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703-1758)

His Life and Personality.—Jonathan Edwards, greatest of colonial divines, was born in Connecticut in 1703, son of a clergyman. From his childhood he was a student of philosophy and science: at ten he wrote an essay against materialism; at twelve he sent to an English naturalist a paper on the habits of spiders; at fourteen he read Locke's *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*. After graduating from Yale in 1720, he studied theology, preached in New York several months, then tutored two years at Yale, and finally became pastor of the church at Northampton, Massachusetts. Here he remained for twenty-three years, that is, until 1750, when, because of certain differences with his congregation, he was forced to resign. The next seven years he spent as missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge in the same state, where in a sort of spiritual exile he composed his most famous work. In 1758 he was elected President of Princeton College, but he died shortly after he entered upon the duties of that office.

Intellectual power and poetic sensibility show in the face and in the writings of Jonathan Edwards. He was the most spiritual and refined of the great New England preachers; gifted with a wonderfully analytic mind and high artistic sensitiveness, he was capable of prolonged and severe thought and a beauty of expression which sometimes borders on poetry. He communed with God and nature in a spirit of quiet rapture that one is accustomed to associate with the visions of a medieval saint. Indeed, there was about this man an atmosphere of saintliness, the elements of which were the white light of reason and the emotional coloring of religious ecstasy. Like him in spirit was his wife, Sarah Pierrepont of New Haven, to whose mystic beauty of soul he paid tribute in a passage worthy of Dante to his Beatrice:

> "They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always . . . She has a strange sweetness in her mind, singular purity in her affections; is most just and conscientious in her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give all the world, lest she should offend this great Being. She is of a won-

derful calmness and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God has manifested Himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about from place to place singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her."

MEMORIAL TO EDWARDS
Northampton, Massachusetts

His Works.—The writings of Jonathan Edwards consist of several strictly theological works; an account of the religious revival in New England about 1740, entitled *Narratives of Surprising Conversions*; numerous sermons preached at Northampton; and the great *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will* (1754). The theological works defend with elaborate argument and Scriptural quotation the extreme Calvinistic doctrines which were beginning to lose their hold in New England. *Surprising Conversions* is a record of the "Great Awakening" which stirred the colonies about the middle of the eighteenth century, and in which the great English preacher Whitefield took a prominent part—a move-

ment that influenced religious thought and action in Great Britain.

In the theological works of Edwards we find a change of emphasis in regard to the punishment of men for their sins. The earlier Puritans insisted on trying religious offenders in the civil courts and inflicting penalties by Scriptural authority. By the eighteenth century, however, this system was breaking down. The next stage was a literal and militant application of the doctrine of future punishment: men might escape here, but unspeakable torments awaited them hereafter. The future punishment of the wicked loomed large in the preaching of Jonathan Edwards; his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," preached at Enfield in 1741, is the most powerful pulpit utterance on that theme in our theological literature. On the minds of the hearers the effect is said to have been appalling: agonized groans interrupted the speaker, whose calm, deliberate manner and merciless logic made the message the more awful to those who granted the premises of his argument, elaborated with familiar illustrations. Even after nearly two centuries one can hardly read this sermon without a shudder, and certainly not without an impulse of admiration for the mind which could so simply and yet so graphically depict an imagined scene of fiery torture. It is Dantean in its terrible realism.

And yet posterity has been too prone to judge Jonathan Edwards entirely by his discourses on Divine vengeance, forgetting the emphasis he also put upon Divine love and the interest he felt in the gentler aspects of nature as manifestations of Divine beauty and beneficence. This preacher of stern and forbidding doctrines was at heart a poet, as the following passage, written after a memorable season of solitary meditation, will show:

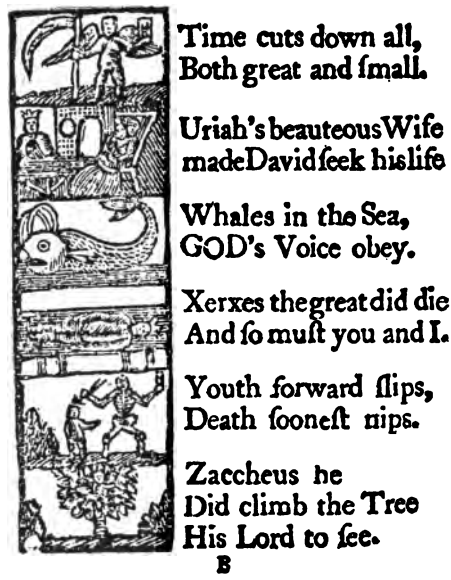
> After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were,

a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon and stars; in the clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the meantime, singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer . . . The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragrancy; standing peacefully and lovingly, in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms, to drink in the light of the sun.

To the delicate sense of beauty in Edwards was joined a mental power of remarkable keenness and depth. Critics generally agree that his *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will* is among the few real contributions by Americans to the thought of the world. In this work, written in the quiet of his retirement at Stockbridge, he seeks with much learned and subtle argument to prove that the human will is not free. Believing with all his soul in the absolute sovereignty of God, he could not reconcile man's freedom with this attribute of the Deity. He held that the cause of an act of the will is the motive, and that therefore the motive does not leave the will free to act of itself. To the modern mind this is not a very convincing sort of argument; but whether we accept the logician's conclusions or not, we are compelled to admit the clearness and intellectual cleverness of his reasoning. While the *Treatise on the Freedom of the Will* hardly belongs to literature proper, it nevertheless is a monument of metaphysical strength and it established the reputation of Jonathan Edwards as a thinker of the first rank. With the passing of this mental giant the first period of American literature may be said to close.

Other Writers in New England.—Other writers and writings in New England during the Colonial Period were the following: Francis Higgin-

son's *New England's Plantation* (1630), "a description of the commodities and discommodities of that country"; William Wood's *New England's Prospect* (1634), "a true, lively and experimental" account of the geography, climate, products, and natives of that region; Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England* (1654); Daniel Gookin's *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England* (1674), a plea for the salvation of the Indians; Sermons of Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, John Cotton; John Eliot's Translation of the Bible into the Algonquin language (1661-'63), a monument to the industry, learning, and missionary zeal of the great "Apostle to the Indians"; Thomas Prince's *History of New England* (1736).



A PAGE FROM *THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER*

In addition to these works one other at least is richly deserving of mention — that quaint and curious little volume known as *The New England Primer*, a medley of religious knowledge in verse and prose on which children were brought up for more than a hundred years. Rhymed alphabet, lists of words to be spelled, catechism, lullabies, versified religious instruction, Biblical quotations, are contained in *The New England Primer*, aptly called the "Little Bible of New England." It is estimated that two million copies of this book were printed and sold during the eighteenth century; the few copies now in existence represent forty editions. (See the fac-simile reprint of *The New England Primer*, made by Ginn and Company from an original owned by G. A. Plimpton, Esq., of New York.)

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1607-1765)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. In Virginia	
John Smith's True Relation (1608)	English Settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, 1607
William Strachey's True Repertory of the Wrack (1610)	
Beverley's History of Virginia (1705)	First Representative Assembly (Jamestown), 1619
William Byrd's History of the Dividing Line (1728)	
George Sandys's Translation of Ovid (1626)	Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1620
"Bacon's Epitaph" (anonymous)	Dutch settle New Amsterdam (New York), 1623
II. In Massachusetts	Harvard College founded, 1636
William Bradford's History of Plymouth (1630-'46)	English take New Amsterdam, 1664
John Winthrop's Journal (History of New England)	Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676
Morton's New English Canaan	
Samuel Sewall's Diary (1673-1729)	First Paper-mill in America, near Philadelphia, 1690
Ward's Simple Cobbler of Aggawamm	
Cotton Mather's Magnalia	First American Newspaper, Public Occurrences (Boston), 1690
Jonathan Edwards's Freedom of the Will (1754)	
Bay Psalm Book (1640); first book printed in America	William and Mary College founded, 1692
Anne Bradstreet's Poems	
Michael Wigglesworth's Day of Doom (1715)	First permanent Newspaper, Boston News-Letter, 1704
	French and Indian War, 1754-'59

PRINCIPAL THEMES: **Adventure, History, Religion, Ethics**

Romantic adventure is more prominent in the Southern writers, Moral and Religious subjects in the Northern. In general, the writers reflect respectively the spirit of the Cavalier and the Puritan.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Osgood's American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, Fisher's The Colonial Era, Fiske's The Beginnings of New England and Old Virginia and her Neighbors (Houghton), Thwaites's The Colonies ("Epochs of American History" series), Lodge's English Colonies in America, Tyler's Narratives of Early Virginia, Eggleston's Beginners of a Nation, Tyler's Cradle of the Republic and England in America, Doyle's English Colonies in America, Cooke's Virginia ("American Commonwealths" series).

Literary.—Tyler's History of American Literature from 1607 to 1765 (Putnam), Cairns's Early American Writers (Macmillan), Trent and Wells's Colonial Prose and Poetry (Crowell), Trent's Southern Writers (Macmillan), Stedman and Hutchinson's Library of American Literature (vols. I, II.)

Representative selections from Colonial authors may be found in Cairns, Trent and Wells, Stedman and Hutchinson, Old South Leaflets (Boston), Maynard's Historical Readings (Merrill), Chronicles of the Pilgrims (Everyman's Library—Dutton), Trent's Southern Writers.

Social.—Earle's Home Life in Colonial Days, Colonial Dames and Goodwives, Child Life in Colonial Days, Customs and Fashions (Macmillan), Fisher's Men, Women, and Manners of Colonial Times; Holliday's Wit and Humor of Colonial Days; Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter; Cooke's Virginia Comedians; Mary Johnston's To Have and to Hold; Chandler and Thames's Colonial Virginia.

CHAPTER TWO

REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

1765-1815

A Time of Transition

The Beginnings of Nationality.—Three thousand miles of ocean separated the American colonies from the home land; attachment to the soil of their adoption had grown through the years; the distance from England and the struggles to build up local governments had caused a sturdy self-reliance to develop in the souls of these transplanted Englishmen; little was needed now to change self-reliance into a desire for independence. The colonies stretched from Georgia to Maine along the Atlantic coast; westward the Alleghanies and the Mississippi were the barriers which the colonists had not passed; France owned Canada and the West. Each English colony was essentially independent of the others, and between those of the North and those of the South there was little communication. As yet nothing had happened to draw them together in action and purpose; no opportunity had been given them to feel and to test their united strength. This opportunity came at the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, which was a contest between France and England for the possession of the North American continent. The victory of England meant the permanence of Anglo-Saxon civilization in North America; henceforth language and institutions were to be English. That war formed a crisis in colonial America. The colonies for the first time got together against a common foe, and in this union of effort we really find the beginnings of American nationality. In that conflict one man emerged from obscurity, young George Washington, of Virginia, who was

soon destined to play a conspicuous part in a mightier struggle for independence.

The American Revolution.—What we know as the "Revolutionary War" was the result of certain legislation in Great Britain objectionable to the colonies and also of a developing sense of political freedom among them; the protest against political oppression was an occasion to express an already widespread and deep-seated desire to manage their own affairs. The colonists wanted to keep house for themselves. This sentiment had been considerably strengthened since the treaty of peace in 1763 brought to a close the French and Indian War, among the results of which may be mentioned the uniting of the colonists, the training of many of them to fight, the lessening of the need of protection against the French, and the removal of hostile rivals from most of the region east of the Mississippi. To the colonial imagination the future must have begun to seem big with promise. However that may be, the trend of events speedily made for separation from the mother country.

The new king, who came to the throne in 1760 as George III, had no mind for conciliation with the American colonies, though he had been duly and eloquently warned by Burke and Pitt of the probable result of his obstinate policy of coercion. The colonies were forbidden to trade with any other nation except England, British troops were sent to America, taxes were imposed upon the colonists, who were not represented in the British Parliament, and in particular a Stamp Act was passed in 1765, requiring the colonists to use stamps on legal and business documents, newspapers, and pamphlets. The unreasonable attitude of the English government together with the growing desire of the colonists for liberty led to the inevitable conflict, the Revolution, from 1775 to 1783, resulting in our political freedom and the birth of a new nation. It should be remembered, however, that nationality was not won simply by the sword, but that back of Washington and his

generals and his "continentals" there was being waged by orators and essayists a fierce war for liberty. Political pamphlets and orations had much to do with the triumph of the cause of the colonists.

The Young Nation.—When the war for political independence ended in 1783, the colonies were free but they were not united in any stable form of government. Through lack of a strong federation of states, some of which were jealous of others, there was grave danger, indeed, of disunion. The "Declaration of Independence" (1776) was a manifesto of the principles for

INDEPENDENCE HALL
Philadelphia

which the several commonwealths had fought and by virtue of which they proclaimed themselves states; now they needed a constitution as a working basis for a centralized government. This constitution, embodying the counsels of their wisest patriots, the states after many delays finally adopted. By 1789 the new republic was organized and in operation, with George Washington, commander of the colonial army in the great war, as first President. This eminent man, whose well-poised character was even greater than his military and political genius, expressed the wish in his "Farewell Address" to the American people, "that union and brotherly love may be perpetual; that the free constitution which is the work of your

hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every part may be stamped with wisdom and virtue."

The acquisition by purchase from France in 1803 of Louisiana, a region extending from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, doubled the national territory and opened the great West for exploration. Men's eyes began to turn longingly westward to the vast stretches of plain and mountain. Hardy pioneers like Lewis and Clarke cut their way through the forests, blazing the trail for the home-maker and the state-builder. The nation, like a young giant, was beginning to feel its strength and to have some faint idea of its imperial opportunity. About this time, moreover, the practical application of two important inventions, Eli Whitney's cotton gin and Robert Fulton's steamboat, added immensely to the industrial progress of the new nation. That progress was temporarily checked, however, by the breaking out of a second war with Great Britain, due chiefly to the forcible removal of seamen from American ships for service on British vessels. The result of this war, which lasted from 1812 to 1815, was a victory for the United States. The conflict welded the states of the Republic into such a compact union that for nearly fifty years the country prospered politically and industrially without any serious interruption.

Influence of English Literature.—The writings and speeches of the Revolutionary Period in America show the influence of the "classical" prose and poetry of eighteenth century English literature. During this century Classicism, or literary conformity to "classic" rules, gradually gave way to Romanticism,[1] a movement toward greater freedom of expression and deeper feeling. The typical classicist in English prose was Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), whose formal, balanced style was imitated by contemporary writers; the typical classicist in English poetry was Alexander Pope (1688-1744), whose artificial rhyming verses, called the "heroic couplet," were

[1]For a discussion of Classicism and Romanticism, see the author's *English Literature*, pp. 217, 235, 278-'80.

widely read and much admired by American versifiers. The somewhat formal and ornate oratory of Burke, Fox, and Sheridan had a decided influence upon the style of our Revolutionary orators. The easier style of Addison and Goldsmith affected the writing of Benjamin Franklin. Other English authors held in popular esteem on this side of the sea were the early novelists, Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) and Henry Fielding (1707-1754); while the romantic, or "Gothic," writers of fiction, such as Horace Walpole and Anne Radcliffe, were reflected in the works of the first American novelist, Charles Brockden Brown. The great Romantic movement, however, which was at this time so significant a force in European literature and politics, was not so dominant in our early literature as the older Classicism. Outside the poems of Freneau and the novels of Brown the influence of Romanticism was slight.

REVOLUTION LITERATURE

American literature of this period consists of orations, political essays, journals and biography, poetry and romance. The most prominent figure is Franklin, though properly speaking not a literary man; in literature proper, Freneau and Brown are conspicuous. Among the orators of the Revolution four may be selected as representative—James Otis and Samuel Adams in Massachusetts, Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry in Virginia; from the political essayists may be chosen for brief consideration—John Adams, Thomas Paine, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. To this list, standing apart as a somewhat lonely figure, should be added the name of the New Jersey Quaker, John Woolman.

Oratory

The desire for liberty of one kind or another has been the inspiring cause of most great oratory. The beginnings of

reformations or revolutions, when men were on the eve of changing their moral or political allegiance, have been the occasions of the most eloquent and effective oratory. A crisis in a people's history makes orators. So it happened in our struggle for independence: the orators had much to do with arousing the colonies to resist British oppression and to carry the war to a successful end; after independence was won, they helped to establish a stable form of government. Not everybody in the colonies favored war with Great Britain, and many became discouraged after the conflict had begun and were willing to have peace at almost any price. This was the orator's opportunity; he stimulated his fellow citizens to thought and action; he kept burning the waning fires of their patriotism. Several of these orators of the Revolution we may now briefly consider.

James Otis (1725-1783).—James Otis was a prominent lawyer of Boston, a graduate of Harvard College, and a man of considerable literary culture. In 1761 the burning question in Massachusetts was whether the king's officers had the right to search private as well as public houses for smuggled goods. Armed with the odious "writs of assistance," or search warrants, these men caused endless annoyance. Otis delivered in the council chamber in Boston a long, impassioned speech protesting against this proceeding; he argued with learning and fiery eloquence against the legality of search warrants, which were often used against innocent citizens out of mere spite. This five hours' speech made a profound impression and established the reputation of James Otis as the foremost orator of the day in New England. John Adams, who was present, likened the orator to "a flame of fire," and continued: "With a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eye into the future, and a torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away everything before him. American independence was then and there born . . Every

man of a crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against writs of assistance." Though the famous speech has not been preserved, the tradition of it handed down by those present makes us realize how powerful was the orator's hold on his audience and, indeed, on his own generation through his silver-tongued defense of the rights of the colonists. Otis used his pen as well as his tongue in the cause of independence, his best known pamphlet being "Rights of the British Colonists Asserted and Proved."

Samuel Adams (1722-1803).—More constructive and versatile than Otis was Samuel Adams, a Boston business man and politician, who, says Webster, "hungered and thirsted for the independence of his country." In the legislature and town meeting he was a leader, and in general an inspirer and director of the new democracy. Patriotic, incorruptible, and enthusiastic for the cause of freedom, he sacrificed private gain for the good of his country and died poor. He held various political offices: he was a member of the legislature and of the Continental congress, governor of his state, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. With many qualities of the successful politician, such as a strong and attractive personality and a power of direct appeal to the masses, were combined the practical ability, foresight, and vigor of a pioneer statesman. He drafted resolutions and carried them through by the force and persuasiveness of his oratory; he wrote scores of newspaper

SAMUEL ADAMS

articles in defense of popular rights; he put forth numerous pamphlets on vital political matters, which this generation has not the patience to read. But even when expressing himself with the pen, he was the orator. The surviving fragments of his speeches give us little idea of what his power over men must have been, according to trustworthy tradition, so much does the man himself—the living voice, the flashing eye, the expressive features—count in oratory. We know enough, however, to put this "chief incendiary," as his Tory enemies called him, among the great Revolutionary orators.

Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794).—In the South voices were also being raised against British oppression and in sympathy with the sentiment for independence among the patriots of the North. One of the most accomplished of the Southern orators was Richard Henry Lee, of Westmoreland County, Virginia, whom his admirers named the "American Cicero." Educated in England, whence his Cavalier ancestors had emigrated in the seventeenth century, young Lee returned to Virginia and entered political life. As his forbears had been Royalist in their sympathies, it was hardly to be expected that Lee would become an aggressive revolutionist; and yet he promptly allied himself with the colonial side and was at once recognized as a leader. He prepared the "Address to the People of the Colonies," recommended by the General Congress of representatives from the Northern and Southern colonies held at Philadelphia in 1774; and it was he who, two years later, was the mover of the Declaration of Independence. Before this he had summed up the strained situation between the mother country and the agitated colonies: "They wish to make us dependent, but they will make us independent; these oppressions will lead us to unite, and thus to secure our liberty." Thus this patriotic Virginian was a prophet of national union. From all accounts, Richard Henry Lee was a man of graceful, pleasing manners, and an elegant and forceful orator, but unfortunately

his speeches have not come down to us, though we have an entertaining collection of his letters.

Patrick Henry (1736-1799).—The greatest of Revolutionary orators was Patrick Henry, of Virginia, called by his contemporaries the "Man of the People" and the "Prophet of Revolution." Born in Hanover County of an ancestry of education and refinement, Henry received his training in books at home and not at college. He had some knowledge of the classics and seems to have been fond of Butler's *Analogy*, a work which furnished many of the old-time youth with a rather substantial sort of mental diet. In his boyhood Patrick Henry is said to have been the pattern of an idler; later on, he tried storekeeping and farming without success; then he studied law, and in 1763 found an opportunity in the famous "Parson's Cause" to show his power as a public speaker. This was the beginning of his long and distinguished career as an orator and statesman. The sleeping genius in him at last awoke and he soon became known as the most eloquent man of his time.

PATRICK HENRY

Two speeches are specially famous—the one before the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg in 1765 against the Stamp Act, and the other in old St. John's Church in Richmond before the Virginia Convention in 1775. The latter speech,

ending with the words "Give me liberty or give me death," is undoubtedly the best known oration in our history and more familiar to Americans than any other piece of secular literature. One cannot read the words of that imperfectly reported speech even now, far removed from the crisis out of which it was born, without something of a thrill, in spite of more than a century of schoolboy declaiming. "Your passions are no longer your own when he addresses them," said George Mason, that

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH
Richmond, Virginia

able fellow Virginian of Henry's. He swept men off their feet. This was natural eloquence; the man, the message, and the critical occasion made a great oration. The spell of the speaker was too strong over the hearer to allow him to take it down; and when the orator tried in the chillier atmosphere of his study to reproduce it, the winged words would not come back. And so we cannot know exactly what the original speeches, hot from the brain and heart of genius, were. We know this, though, that the eloquence of Patrick Henry was a mighty

force in welding the colonies together at the beginning of a struggle which resulted in national selfhood—a struggle more significant than even he himself then dreamed.

The Political Essay

While the orators were agitating the question of independence for the colonies before legislative bodies, the writers of essays on the constitutional aspects of the problem were also busy. It was a time of newspaper articles and political pamphlets. No phase of the important matter of nation-making was neglected: the fundamental principles of liberty, the nature of the new constitution, the functions of government, the views of the two political parties, were thoroughly discussed. Strictly speaking, these political essays are not pure literature, but some of them are so well written and the issues they set forth are so integral a part of our great formative period, that the literary historian must give at least a brief account of their authorship and significance. Wherever such essays reveal a sense for style and a desire on the part of the writer to make clear great abiding principles, without an appeal to mere partisanship, they deserve to be ranked as contributions to our national prose literature. Typical of the long list of political essayists are John Adams, Thomas Paine, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison. To these should be added the exalted name of George Washington.

John Adams (1735-1826).—John Adams, cousin of Samuel Adams already considered, was successively diplomatist, first Vice-President, and second President of the United States. Out of his extensive experience and reading he wrote a number of essays for the newspapers and several long works, the most important of which is the *Defense of the Constitution*, published in 1787. In this book he makes an exhaustive study of various forms of government from the earliest periods. To the reader of to-day, however, the *Diary* (1755-1785) and the *Letters*, of

which he wrote a great many, are far more interesting. In them we find reflected a vigorous personality in various moods—some of which were certainly not amiable—and we have a record of men and events of the time in graphic pictures and telling phrases. The *Diary* and the correspondence of John Adams form a rich storehouse of information for the American historian.

Thomas Paine (1737-1809).—Thomas Paine, a native Englishman, came to America through the influence of Franklin who met him in England, and became editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine.* The practice which this editorial work afforded stood him in good stead when in 1776 he turned to writing pamphlets. That year he published *Common Sense,* strongly advocating separation from Great Britain. *Common Sense* is one of the ablest pamphlets of the day and did much to help the Revolutionary cause. Its popularity may be inferred from the fact that a hundred and twenty thousand copies were sold in three months and that half a million copies must have been read in this country and Europe. Paine now gave himself with energy to the struggle for independence, serving in the army and elsewhere. His services to the colonies in their fight for nationality were gratefully recognized by Congress at the close of the war. About this time he went to France where his later life was darkened by a short imprisonment for opposing the execution of the French king. He also offended England by a reply to a speech of Burke's. He attacked Washington for not procuring his release from prison in Paris and by this attack made many enemies in the United States. But that which added most to the unpopularity of this eccentric man was his *The Age of Reason,* a book that made his name accursed in many minds.

Paine's reputation for hostility to religion has led posterity very largely to lose sight of his patriotic services during the Revolution and the real merits of his two pamphlets, *Common Sense* and *The Crisis. The Age of Reason* is more offensive

in manner than in the matter, which in so tolerant an age as ours would probably excite little comment; indeed, the book has long ago met its just deserts and few read it now. The tone of the work is flippant and generally in bad taste, in keeping with the irreverent spirit of dealing with sacred things common in the eighteenth century. Now, when it comes to *The Crisis*, the modern reader will understand at once why that work had such an influence over the thoughtful men of the time. The style is direct and vital, at times even breezy, and now and then an epigram sticks in the reader's memory. Washington thought so highly of the pamphlet as to have it read to the army at Valley Forge for encouragement. The opening sentences of *The Crisis* have often been quoted:

> These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.

"The Federalist": Hamilton; Madison; Jay.—Less popular and less immediately influential than Paine's pamphlets—though it was much praised and proved more far-reaching in its effects than these—was *The Federalist*, the joint production of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. This series of political essays was originally contributed during the years 1787-'88 to New York papers in the form of letters to the people, for the purpose of defending and interpreting the newly adopted national Constitution. Considerable opposition to the Constitution in several states—notably that in Virginia led by Patrick Henry—made such a series of articles particularly timely. They were collected in 1788 in one volume and named *The Federalist*, a work which has come to be regarded as one of

our greatest political classics. As a clear exposition of the theory of government it has not been excelled, and its luminous arguments, dealing with basic principles, have been the admiration of publicists throughout our national existence.

Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804), who wrote more than half of the eighty-five papers in *The Federalist*, was born in the West Indies, but came to New York at fifteen and entered King's College (now Columbia University), where as a student he began writing for the press on political subjects. From that time to his death, he was active in public life,—in the army, in Congress, and as a member of Washington's cabinet. Hamilton was the leader of the Federalist party and an able defender of the principles of centralized government. In clearness of style and comprehensiveness of statement he is not surpassed by any of our political essayists.

James Madison (1751-1836), who was associated with Hamilton and Jay in writing *The Federalist*, was a Virginian, a graduate of Princeton College, member of Congress, secretary of State, and President of the United States. He has been called the "Father of the Constitution" because he fought so strenuously in the Virginia and national constitutional conventions for the adoption of the Constitution and explained and defended it so ably in *The Federalist*. He was a man of scholarly ability and philosophic temperament, a clear and painstaking writer on constitutional questions. Professor Trent is inclined to the opinion that Madison "approaches the best type of solid, well-trained, and widely informed British statesman more nearly than does any other American."[1]

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826).—The most accomplished, democratic, and farseeing of the nation-builders was Thomas Jefferson, author of the "Declaration of Independence," minister to France, President of the United States, and founder of the University of Virginia. Educated at William and Mary College, he early entered political life, and until his death

[1]Trent: *History of American Literature*, p. 152.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

at Monticello in 1826 he exerted a notable influence in his state and nation. A man of unusually rich and varied culture, he was both a brilliant theorist and a practical statesman. In him great mental power and wide knowledge were united with democratic sympathies more harmoniously than in any other political leader of his day. He recognized the worth of the individual and believed with all his soul in the rights of the masses; and so he touches the imagination of men of to-day as few of the elder statesmen do. He seems modern and therefore interests us, which is another way of saying that he was an idealist; and all idealists appeal to the future.

In the light of our national development it is very clear that Jefferson was a prophet; indeed, so far ahead of his own generation in his thinking and planning was this remarkable man, that not even yet have we realized his ideals. For instance,

he worked out an elaborate scheme of public education which long seemed quite theoretical, but which recent experience is showing to be beneficently practical. The aims of Jefferson were democratic in the best sense. If we judge from his epitaph, composed by himself, the three of his many services by which he wished to be remembered are the writing of the "Declaration of Independence," the proposing of the statute for religious freedom in Virginia, and the founding of the

MONTICELLO
Jefferson's Home near University of Virginia

University of Virginia. These contributions, it will be noted, stand respectively for three kinds of liberty—political, spiritual, and intellectual.

As a writer Jefferson is at his best in the "Declaration of Independence," though his first "Inaugural Address" has decided literary merit. The immortal "Declaration" appeals to the heart as well as to the head, and is therefore much more than a mere state paper. The introduction and the conclusion strike a note of real eloquence, despite the fact that the somewhat sonorous and formal style is no longer that of our best prose; certainly the form of statement and the abiding truth of

the principles laid down, also justify the classification of that document as literature. And if the germinal and tonic power of that paper in the cause of freedom the world over be taken into consideration, assuredly its author should be placed among the great creative geniuses. The first "Inaugural Address" is a political classic that should be read by every one who would understand the elemental principles of republican government and the motives which inspired the founders of the American nation.

George Washington (1732-1799).—It would not be correct, of course, to call Washington a literary man, nor in truth does such a designation rightly belong to the political essayists who have just been considered, for they as well as the "Father of his Country" wrote literature only incidentally. The "Farewell Address" of Washington, however, is written in prose of such dignity and nobility and its thought is so solemnly sincere that it has long held a secure place among American prose classics. It has the hallowed tone of a benediction. The same high seriousness characterizes the letter "To the Governors of all the States" and other communications of this well-poised and august personality. After all, it is the exalted character of Washington which, more than anything else, gives his writing its noble quality.

LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE STATES

The Middle Colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, were settled by the English later than the Northern and Southern colonies already considered. In the last third of the seventeenth century there appeared a number of works in the Middle Colonies of a descriptive and historical nature, just as earlier, similar books had been published about the older colonies. These pamphlets hardly merit, however, any attention in so brief a work as this. During the eighteenth century the Middle Colonies became more prominent in

literature, with Philadelphia as the intellectual center. This city was second to Boston in literary prominence for the first sixty or seventy years of that century, and then New York began to surpass it, as we shall see in the next chapter. The population of the Middle Colonies was more mixed than that of the New England and Southern Colonies, and conditions were more favorable than in New England to freedom of expression. This was particularly true in Pennsylvania, which had been settled by Penn and his Quakers (1682), who believed in liberty of thought and conscience. Accordingly, we find in Philadelphia in the eighteenth century widespread interest in science and a generous literary culture. A printing press was early set up there; the first magazine in America was published in that city; and there was established the first public library.

Besides an honorable list of scientists who flourished in colonial Philadelphia—such men as Bartram, the botanist; Rittenhouse, astronomer and mathematician; and Thomas Godfrey, inventor of the quadrant,—there were Thomas Godfrey, Jr., the poet, and Francis Hopkinson, accomplished wit and versifier.

THOMAS GODFREY (1736-1763), son of the mathematician of that name, was born in Philadelphia and died in North Carolina in his twenty-seventh year. His brief life was spent in business and incidentally in writing verse, some of which was published in a magazine of his native city. Besides a number of short poems, which show the influence of seventeenth and eighteenth century English poets, Godfrey wrote a tragedy, *The Prince of Parthia*, which enjoys the distinction of being the first ever written in America. It was played in Philadelphia in 1767. While not without merit, *The Prince of Parthia* is naturally a crude performance and should be judged as a promise of greater things from its youthful author, whose career was cut short by untimely death.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1737-1791), lawyer, member of the Continental Congress, Federal judge, and signer of the Declara-

tion of Independence, was one of the most accomplished and versatile men of his day. He tried his hand at various kinds of writing—prose allegory, essays, orations, scientific papers, songs, satires and burlesques,—and with conspicuous success, if we may judge from his contemporary fame. He was interested in all sorts of things, being, besides a learned and upright judge, an amateur scientist, a painter of local renown, a musician and composer. His best known prose writing is "A Pretty Story," an allegory with some of the genial humor of Addison and a touch of the satirical method of Swift. One ballad of his still makes fairly good reading, "The Battle of the Kegs," a political skit based on a real incident[1] and immensely popular in Revolutionary times. Besides this best remembered ballad of Hopkinson, there is a song of his, "My Generous Heart Disdains," which strongly suggests the manner of the English Cavalier poets, Robert Herrick and George Wither, as these two stanzas show:

My gen'rous heart disdains
  The slave of love to be,
I scorn his servile chains,
  And boast my liberty.
    This whining
    And pining
  And wasting with care,
Are not to my taste, be she ever so fair.

Still uncertain is tomorrow,
Not quite certain is to-day—
Shall I waste my time in sorrow?
Shall I languish life away?
All because a cruel maid
Hath not love with love repaid.

[1]An American inventor, David Bushnell, had filled a number of kegs with powder and placed in them a crude kind of machinery for exploding them. This "fleet" of kegs he set afloat among the British shipping on the Delaware at Philadelphia in January, 1778. They caused considerable alarm to the enemy, but did little damage. This was the occasion of Hopkinson's ballad.

Among the heralds of American literature Francis Hopkinson, sometimes seriously, sometimes gayly exercising his talent for art, but always reminiscent of the past and with only a faint presentiment of the new times, is an interesting figure. To his son, Joseph Hopkinson, we owe the famous patriotic ode, "Hail Columbia! Happy Land!"

The one great name in the literature of the Middle Colonies, which became states before his death, is of course Benjamin Franklin, the Philadelphia printer. Another name, far less known but nevertheless worthy and interesting as a study in contrast, is that of the New Jersey Quaker, John Woolman. To a consideration of Franklin we will now proceed, and then to a brief sketch of his more spiritual contemporary.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

His Life.—Benjamin Franklin, publicist, scientist, and statesman, was born in Boston in 1706, the fifteenth child of a maker of soap and candles. The boy had slender educational opportunities because of his father's large family, but he early acquired a taste for reading and eagerly devoured such books as he could get his hands on, prominent among which were Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Plutarch's *Lives*, and Addison's *Spectator*. After a little schooling, he was put to work at the age of ten in his father's shop, but not liking this, he threatened to run off to sea; thereupon, his father apprenticed him to his brother James, a printer. He remained with his brother four or five years, during which he read much and diligently sought to improve his style by writing essays modeled on the *Spectator* for his brother's paper, *The New England Courant*. Except for the earlier composition of two ballads, this was Franklin's entrance upon authorship. About this time he had a disagreement with his brother, and ran away to Philadelphia to make his living under freer conditions.

Of his entrance into Philadelphia at the age of seventeen, Franklin has given an interesting account in his *Autobiography*. Here he found employment with a printer, and soon attracted the attention of the governor of the colony, who sent him to England to buy a printing outfit. Franklin found, however, on his arrival in London that he had been grossly deceived by his supposed friend, the governor, and that neither money nor a letter of introduction had been sent as promised. The next eighteen months were spent in London by the eighteen-year-old boy in working in printing

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

offices; meanwhile he was reading, writing, and meeting a few notable people. He returned to Philadelphia and engaged in the printing business, first in the employ of others, and later as owner of an establishment. He rapidly rose into prominence by his thrift and his interest in the affairs of the city, to whose welfare he made many substantial and enduring contributions. By 1748, when he was forty-two, he had made sufficient money to retire from business and devote himself to science and politics.

The rest of Franklin's long life was spent in the service of his country and in scientific research and experiment, for which he had early developed a fondness. He was a member of the Colonial Assembly and postmaster-general; he spent four or five years in London as the Assembly's agent and twelve years more (1764-'75) on a political mission for the colonies; then he went to France in the interests of the American struggle for independence, where he continued to represent his country until after the Revolutionary War. In these diplomatic positions, both in England and in France, he won the high esteem of people, scholars,

and statesmen. By the French in particular he was ardently admired. He returned to America in 1785, advanced in age and honors and still the public-spirited citizen. Two years later he was a member of the Constitutional Convention. In his long life of eighty-four years Franklin had known Cotton Mather and George Washington, had seen the colonies grow into a nation, and had signed four great historical documents—the "Declaration of Independence," the treaty of friendship with France, the treaty of peace with England, and the Constitution of the United States.

Characteristics.—Shrewdness, thrift, and common sense, are the qualities most conspicuous in Franklin. He is the embodiment of the practical side of the American character. New Englander as he was by birth, he is in striking contrast to the Puritan with his religious mysticism. Both in teachings and in life Franklin was essentially utilitarian. "To thine own self be true," in Polonius's philosophy as well as in Franklin's, might be interpreted to mean "Look out for number one!" whether it applied to a man, a city, or a nation. Even virtue must be made to "pay." Franklin thought that by making men thrifty and contented you make them virtuous. That is good material philosophy, but it is neither very inspiring nor in the long run very satisfying. The worldly-wise old philanthropist was not an idealist. He belonged to a century that did not greatly trouble itself about spiritual values; he was in temper a classicist and not a romanticist; he had the positive attitude of mind, the prosaic temperament, though happily relieved by humor, of the eighteenth century, that chilly, self-complacent period of prose and reason in literature. The spiritual element was not in him. The sturdiness and balance of his character, however, strongly appeal to the popular mind; and though he was lacking in those ideal qualities of sentiment and imagination which arouse the highest enthusiasm, his honesty, his democratic simplicity, and his cool common sense, are virtues which command our respect and admiration.

His Public Spirit.—Franklin was a many-sided man of large public spirit, or in the phrase of to-day, "civic spirit." He was one of the leading scientists of his time in a city where interest in scientific study was acute, and his experiments in electricity made him world-famous. He knew a good deal about a great many things, and he turned that knowledge to practical account. His own city of Philadelphia owes him more than any other man for his manifold benefactions: he worked for a good police system, led in the movement for clean

AN EARLY PRINTING PRESS

streets, helped establish a public hospital and a public library, organized a fire department, invented a stove and generously declined to take out a patent for it, founded an academy which developed into the University of Pennsylvania, left money to the cities of Boston and Philadelphia for municipal improvements, and did many other useful things for his city and state. In his larger career as diplomat and statesman, his patriotic

services at home and abroad were invaluable to this country in a critical stage.

His Writings.—The collected works of Franklin fill ten large volumes, but only two of his works properly belong to literature—the *Autobiography* and *Poor Richard's Almanac*,—though the "Bagatelles," or "trifles," written in France, may be said to have literary value. The *Autobiography* was begun in 1771 and discontinued in 1788, two years before the author's death; it extends only to 1757, but it covers the most interesting years in the making of a versatile man. In this work Franklin sets forth in a simple and frank manner the significant events and purposes of his life from his childhood to middle age—his early training, schemes for self-improvement, his first struggles in Philadelphia, and his plans for public improvements in that city. The most famous passages are those on his efforts to form a good style, his love of standard books, and his entrance into Philadelphia. The last is presumably familiar to every reader of American biography. An extract from his account of how he learned to write, including his literary models, is worth reproducing:

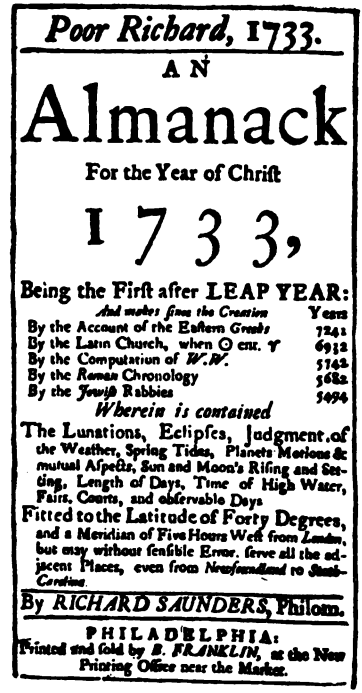
> From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the *Pilgrim's Progress*, my first collection was of John Bunyan's works in separate little volumes . . . Plutarch's *Lives* there was in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of Defoe's called *An Essay on Projects*, and another of Dr. Mather's, called *Essays to Do Good*, which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life . . .
>
> About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then without looking at the book, tried to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any

suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my Spectator with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. . . . I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again; I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them to the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and complete the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious.

Of all the books of the earlier periods of American literature Franklin's *Autobiography* is the only one which is still popular, and it is likely that generations hence it will be read with the same general interest. The reason is not far to seek: the book is personal and human, a candid, common-sense record of a successful and versatile man's life in direct, simple language, seasoned with kindly humor and shrewd comment. It is one of the vital, concrete books, full of a man's self, and such works the world does not let die. Perhaps there is no other book in our literature which has made a more telling appeal to young Americans in stimulating them to habits of industry and thrift; certainly it is the one work of Franklin that no young man should fail to read.

In 1732 Franklin began publishing *Poor Richard's Almanac*, taking the name from that of a London almanac-maker, Richard Saunders, who becomes an oracle of practical wisdom. This almanac was issued for twenty-five years, and was immensely popular. There was no surer way of getting good advice before the people than in such a medium, for everybody bought and diligently read an almanac, and governed his conduct in part at least by its wise counsel on the weather, health, and things in general. A colonial household of Pennsylvania in the mid-eighteenth century no doubt regarded *Poor Richard's*

Almanac as a necessary article of mental and moral diet. And so Franklin fed them on proverbs like these: "God helps them that help themselves"; "One to-day is worth two to-morrows"; "Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee"; "Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise"; "The sleeping fox catches no poultry"; "Have you somewhat to do to-morrow, do it to-day"; "Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead." Many of these sayings put into the mouth of "Poor Richard" were probably not original with Franklin—it is always difficult to trace a common maxim to its author—but he improved the phrasing of some and coined others outright; he put everyday business principles into portable form. In 1757 he collected a large number of the proverbs and published them as the preface to the *Almanac* for 1758, under the title, "The Way to Wealth"; and this preface still has a wide circulation, being reprinted in various forms each year by savings banks and other organizations for stimulating the sense of economy. "The Way to Wealth" has, more than any other of his writings, given Franklin the reputation, particularly in Europe, of being a "typical American."



Poor Richard, 1733.

AN

Almanack

For the Year of Chriſt

1733,

Being the Firſt after LEAP YEAR:

And makes ſince the Creation	Years
By the Account of the Eaſtern *Greeks*	7241
By the Latin Church, when ⊙ ent. ♈	6932
By the Computation of *W.W.*	5742
By the *Roman* Chronology	5682
By the *Jewiſh* Rabbies	5494

Wherein is contained

The Lunations, Eclipſes, Judgment of the Weather, Spring Tides, Planets Motions & mutual Aſpects, Sun and Moon's Riſing and Setting, Length of Days, Time of High Water, Fairs, Courts, and obſervable Days

Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours Weſt from *London*, but may without ſenſible Error, ſerve all the adjacent Places, even from *Newfoundland* to *South-Carolina*.

By *RICHARD SAUNDERS*, Philom.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed and ſold by *B. FRANKLIN*, at the New Printing Office near the Market.

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC
Title-page reduced

Somewhat similar to the sayings of the *Almanac* are the "Bagatelles," sketches composed by Franklin while living in

France. Some of these are in the form of letters addressed to intimate friends in that country. The best known of the "Bagatelles" are the "Story of the Whistle" and the "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout," from the former of which we get the oft-quoted remark, "He has paid very dear for his whistle." The "Bagatelles" contain many wise aphorisms, though they seem less natural than the proverbs of *Poor Richard's Almanac.*

Franklin's Literary Contribution.—Strictly speaking, Franklin was not a literary man, but a philosopher and statesman. The writings just considered have, however, certain qualities that belong to good literary prose—simplicity, clearness, humor, suggestiveness. He consciously, as we have seen, modeled his style on Addison, Bunyan, and Defoe; and indeed he assumed to be something of a literary critic, entertaining himself with an attempted improvement on the Book of Job. It is needless to say that in this he wasted his time and showed a lack of appreciation of the spirit and majestic speech of the Bible. The truth is, whenever Franklin ventured beyond the realm of the practical, he was no longer a master. He was a prudential philosopher with his eyes on the useful; but his humor, his abiding common sense, and his intensely human quality save his writings from dullness. His style impresses the reader of to-day as essentially modern, and he is really the first familiar figure in our literature.

John Woolman (1720-1772).—Very different in temperament and aims from Franklin was his contemporary, John Woolman, the New Jersey Quaker. He was a pure idealist and something of a mystic; led by an "inner light," he became an itinerant preacher of various philanthropic reforms for children, laborers, and others, whose oppression and sufferings moved his gentle soul to pity; he established missions for the spread of the views of his sect and as centers of social service. Woolman was one of the earliest advocates in this country of such matters as our peace societies and labor organizations are now actively in-

terested in. To support himself simply, without serious interference with his preaching tours, he learned the trade of tailor. These tours extended along the Atlantic seaboard as far south as the Carolinas. Indeed he wandered far and wide, as the spirit moved him, journeying at last to England to work there among the Quakers, or Friends; at York he became a victim to the smallpox and died in that English city.

The work which entitles Woolman to be classed among our literary men—a rank this modest man would have been the first to disclaim—is the *Journal*, covering the last sixteen years of his life. It is a record of his labors and meditations, the spiritual nature of which, as well as the charm of his style and the secret of his own character, this sentence will reveal: "We are taught by renewed experience to labor for an inward stillness; at no time to seek for words, but to live in the spirit of truth, and utter that to the people which truth opened in us." Two well-known writers, Charles Lamb and the poet Whittier, have paid tribute to the appeal of Woolman's *Journal*; the Englishman, charmed by the quaint simplicity of the man and his book advises readers to "get the writings of John Woolman by heart"; the Quaker poet, admiring the peaceful creed and the strong anti-slavery sentiments of Woolman, speaks of "a sweetness as of violets" in his words. While the modern reader is unwilling to go so far in his praises, he is nevertheless genuinely attracted by the pure moral quality of the *Journal*, unique among the writings of the day.

Poetry

In the Revolutionary Period poetry consisted for the most part of political satire, patriotic verse, and a few lyrics on nature. Some of it is in the manner of the English satirists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Butler, Dryden, and Pope; other verse shows the influence of Thomson, Goldsmith, Cowper, and Burns; the lyric poems suggest the con-

PHILIP FRENEAU

temporary Romantic poets across the sea, Wordsworth and Coleridge. The chief figure was Philip Freneau; there was, besides, a group of clever versifiers famous in their day, known as the "Hartford Wits," three of whom—Trumbull, Dwight, and Barlow—may be briefly noticed.

PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832)

His Life.—Philip Freneau was born in New York City, but spent much of his life in New Jersey. He was educated at Princeton College, where he was the roommate and classmate of James Madison. Another classmate of Freneau was H. H. Brackenridge, a writer of some note. Freneau taught school for a while, and in 1775 went to the West Indies, where he remained for several years, wandering about in the islands and writing verses. Before coming to the West Indies, he had studied law and worked for a while on a Philadelphia newspaper; but he was restless, and the sea attracted him. After leaving the islands, he spent the next

eight or ten years mostly on ships, visiting various parts of the world; in 1780 the boat on which he was a passenger was captured by the British, and he was confined for a time in the enemy's notorious prison ships in New York harbor. His sufferings furnished the theme of one of his bitterest satires.

In 1790 Freneau married and turned again to editorial work for a livelihood. President Jefferson appointed him to "the clerkship for foreign languages," a minor position in the Department of State. Along with his duties as translator for the government, he published the *National Gazette* in Philadelphia; but so indiscreetly did he attack the Federalists in his paper, that Jefferson was accused, though unjustly, of inciting a public official, appointed by himself, to assail his political enemies. Freneau was accordingly forced to give up his paper. His remaining years were spent partly in New York, where he undertook another newspaper venture, and partly at his farm near Mount Pleasant, N. J., where he issued on his own press an edition of his poems and published an almanac. Meanwhile he had taken another sea voyage, going as far as the Orient. He lived through the second war with Great Britain, and on into the settled years of our national period, dying in 1832. Returning from a social gathering one winter's night, he lost his way in a furious storm and the next morning was found dead by the roadside.

His Poetry.—Freneau wrote satires, patriotic verses, one or two poems of weird imaginative power, and a handful of lyrics on nature and the Indian. His political satires were written against the British in patriotic defense of the Revolutionary cause; the strongest of these is "The British Prison Ship," in which he passionately denounces his tormentors in that floating jail. It is not these efforts, however, that commend the author to posterity, vigorous and clever though they are; by his shorter poems, rather, will this early national singer be remembered. "The House of Night," written in the West Indies, shows that fondness for the mysterious and the morbid which we later find in Poe. This poem on the death of Death has some excellent stanzas, in spite of the ghostly gloom that pervades the dismal theme:

Sweet music can the fiercest pains assuage:
She bids the soul to heaven's blest mansions rise;
She calms despair, controls infernal rage;
And deepest anguish, when it hears her, dies.

. . . . . .

O'er a dark field I held my dubious way,
Where Jack-a-lanthorn walked his lonely round;
Beneath my feet substantial darkness lay,
And screams were heard from the distempered ground.

Nor looked I back, till to a far-off wood,
Trembling with fear, my weary feet had sped;
Dark was the night, but at the enchanted dome
I saw the infernal windows flaming red.

Better than all this, indeed, are the little poems on nature and on the Indians, and those feeling verses on the brave soldiers who fell in the battle at Eutaw Springs, South Carolina. American subjects receive charming treatment in "The Wild Honeysuckle," "To a Caty-did," "To a Honey Bee," and "The Indian Burying Ground." Here we find for the first time that turning away from conventional themes to those more distinctively American; and thus we have in Freneau a precursor of Bryant, Cooper and Simms, Longfellow and Lanier. He is the first writer to put the Indian into poetry, and he is the first to deal with nature in a spirit of rare and delicate sympathy. His is the most important name in American poetry before Bryant. Nor does it lessen the significance of Freneau's contribution to say that he owed much to Milton and Gray; there are doubtless echoes of these masters in many lines, but he was looking about him and choosing native subjects and making them at home in harmonious verse; and so in him there is heard a new note, there is perceived a new coloring. Such stanzas as these, for instance, are refreshing after the dreary versifying of the colonial period:

Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,

Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet:
No roving foot shall crush thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came:
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between is but an hour,
The frail duration of a flower.
—*From* "The Wild Honeysuckle."

Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted half by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.

By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In habit for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer, a shade.
—*From* "The Indian Burying Ground."

THE HARTFORD WITS

A group of Connecticut men who devoted themselves during the Revolution and afterwards to the cultivation of literature, came to be known as the "Hartford Wits." The center of literary activity had, as we have seen, been transferred from Boston southward; about this time Hartford became a sort of literary capital through the writing of a number of Yale graduates, who banded themselves together for the patriotic purpose of making a literature worthy of the young nation. The three leading spirits in this praiseworthy design were John Trumbull, Timothy Dwight, and Joel Barlow. These gentlemen and their colleagues cultivated the Muses much in the fashion of the English classicists, of whom Pope was the acknowledged high-priest.

John Trumbull (1750-1831).—The name of John Trumbull, the most eminent of the "Hartford Wits," has all but faded from the modern mind, though for more than a generation he was highly esteemed both at home and abroad as a poetic genius. He was a wonderful child, being able to repeat volumes of verse when only a few years old and passing the Yale entrance examinations (quite elementary as compared with the present) at the age of seven; he did not, however, enter college until he was thirteen. After his graduation he tutored at Yale, then studied law under John Adams at Boston, and gave himself to politics and literature. Late in life he "went west," and died in Detroit, Michigan, in 1831.

Trumbull's most important work is *McFingal*, a burlesque epic after the manner of Butler's *Hudibras*, and so like its English prototype in places that quotations from it may easily be mistaken for lines from the English poem. *McFingal* celebrates in mock-heroic fashion an American Tory, who is tarred and feathered and fastened to a liberty pole for his speeches in the town-meeting in favor of the royalist cause. This is the most famous political satire of the Revolution. Its popularity may be judged from the fact that it ran through more than thirty editions. In 1776, the year of its appearance, the things of which it treats were of burning interest, and the clever hits went home; now we wonder why it had such a reputation, even though we admire the mental agility shown in the long cantos of jingling lines in rocking-horse meter.

Timothy Dwight (1752-1817).—Another of the "Hartford Wits" was Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards and college-mate of John Trumbull. After taking his degree at Yale he too was a tutor in his Alma Mater; then he served for a year as chaplain in the Continental army; after this he tried farming and teaching; he became pastor of a church at Greenfield, Connecticut, and in 1795 president of Yale, holding that position with distinction until his death. Early in his career Dwight projected an epic poem on a grand scale

to be called *The Conquest of Canaan*. This he patiently wrought out in the "heroic couplet" of the English classic school; it is indeed a credit to his industry, but it brings weariness of spirit to the reader. More pleasing is *Greenfield Hill*, a pastoral poem, in which are happy touches of local color—reflections of the life and landscape of a Connecticut village—reminding one of passages from Goldsmith and Thomson and other pioneer Romanticists. Two lyric poems keep Dwight's memory alive to-day—one the patriotic song composed while he was chaplain in the army,—

> Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,
> The queen of the world and child of the skies!

and the other the familiar hymn, a paraphrase of the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm,—

> I love thy kingdom, Lord,
> The house of thine abode.

Joel Barlow (1754-1812).—The most versatile of this trio of wits was Joel Barlow, who also graduated at Yale College and forthwith grew ambitious to immortalize himself and his country in a huge poem. But along with his making of verse he did a great many other things: he practised law, edited a newspaper and a hymnbook, kept a bookstore, was agent in Paris for a western land company, was United States consul in Algiers, and minister to France. His longest production, *The Columbiad*, an epic poem in ten books, is an enlargement of his earlier "Vision of Columbus," in which the discoverer is taken by an angel from prison to a lofty height from which he beholds in vision the future greatness of America. *The Columbiad* has long ago suffered respectable literary burial, but Barlow's mock-heroic poem, "Hasty Pudding," composed in France and dedicated to Martha Washington, is still alive and well worth reading, as the following lines may show:

Come, dear bowl,
Glide o'er my palate and inspire my soul.
The milk beside thee smoking from the kine,
Its substance mingled, married with thine,
Shall cool and temper thy superior heat,
And save the pains of blowing while I eat.
Oh, could the smooth, the emblematic song
Flow like thy genial juices o'er my tongue,
Could those mild morsels in my numbers chime,
And as they roll in substance roll in rhyme,
No more thy awkward unpoetic name
Should shun the Muse or prejudice thy fame,
But rising grateful to th' accustomed ear,
All bards should catch it and all realms revere.

Patriotic Ballads.—Large numbers of songs were written during the Revolution. Some of these are mere doggerel, without any literary quality; others ceased to be interesting after the heat and passion of the great conflict had passed away; a few touch the deeper chords of emotion and are vital still. In general, our revolutionary lyrics lack the spontaneous simplicity of genuine ballads, such as the old English folk-songs, being more or less imitative and artificial, as was nearly all the poetry of the later eighteenth century; some are parodies or burlesques, adapted to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Mention has already been made of Francis Hopkinson's "Battle of the Kegs" and Joseph Hopkinson's "Hail Columbia," two of the best known poems inspired by the Revolution. Other songs are "Bold Hathorne," Dickinson's "Liberty Song," "Virginia Banishing Tea" (by "a young woman of Virginia"), "The Yankee's Return from Camp," and "Volunteer Boys." Many of these songs are anonymous. Of all the ballads of that time the one of highest poetic quality is "Nathan Hale," or "Hale in the Bush," which has a tender, haunting melody; it begins:

The breezes went steadily through the tall pines,
A-saying "oh! hu-ush!" a-saying "oh! hu-ush!"
As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse
For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the bush.

"Keep still!" said the thrush as she nestled her young
In a nest by the road, in a nest by the road;
"For the tyrants are near, and with them appear
What bodes us no good, what bodes us no good."

During our second war with Great Britain, known as the "War of 1812," the most noted song was, of course, "The Star-Spangled Banner" (1814) by Francis Scott Key, of Maryland, composed as he saw the American flag still floating on Fort McHenry the morning after the British attack.

Prose Fiction

The few novels, or romances, written in America during the Revolutionary Period reflect the more marked characteristics of eighteenth century English novels. The novel proper—that is, a picture of actual life under more or less familiar conditions—began with Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), whose *Pamela* (1740) is usually regarded as the first modern novel. His greatest work is *Clarissa Harlowe.* Richardson was something of a sentimentalist, but his great contemporary, Henry Fielding (1707-1754), whose masterpiece is *Tom Jones,* was more of a realist, depicting men and manners in a broadly human way. These two Englishmen were the fathers of the novel; following them were several writers of fantastic stories, full of mystery and horror, which came to be known as "Gothic" romances. They were in marked contrast to the realistic novels of Richardson and Fielding, which, true to the spirit of the earlier eighteenth century, had something of "classic" restraint. The word "Gothic" stood for the distinctly imaginative in literature, just as Gothic architecture was more elaborate, more decorated, than the severer classic; in poetry and fiction "Gothic" meant highly romantic. In 1764 Horace Walpole wrote *The Castle of Otranto,* a wildly impossible romance; toward the end of the century Mrs. Anne Radcliffe published *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* a story abounding in strange,

unearthly sights and sounds. These and other similar productions in the prose fiction of the time show the influence of the Romantic movement, already mentioned.

The first American novelist of note was Charles Brockden Brown, in whose writings are reflected the traits of the "Gothic" romances, so popular in England when he grew up. Before Brown, however, several novels had been written in America which, by their sentimental, moralizing tone, plainly reveal their debt to Richardson. Among these were Mrs. Sarah Morton's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) and Mrs. Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1790). But in a new and vigorous country, where the strenuous pioneer-life left little time for idle dreaming, novels of soft sentiment would naturally find less place than romances of adventure; and so we find that the earliest American stories are, in spite of their imitative character, tinged with local color. The late beginning of prose fiction in this country is of course due in the main to the hostile attitude of the Puritans, and indeed of many others besides, to novels of all kinds as demoralizing. By the first years of the nineteenth century, however, this feeling had sufficiently changed and, moreover, the national life had become sufficiently settled, for the work of the novelist to win approval, if not hearty applause. At this stage appeared a writer of romances, Charles Brockden Brown, the forerunner of Cooper, Hawthorne, and Poe.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN (1771-1810)

His Life.—Charles Brockden Brown was born in Philadelphia in 1771 of Quaker ancestry. A delicate constitution prevented any very long or systematic attendance at school, but the boy was fond of books and read widely and steadily; he early began to write verses and sketches and to show a preference for that romantic form of literature which appeared in the English fiction of the time. He was shy, retiring, and given to solitary walks and to morbid reflection. The latter was no doubt intensified by his ill-health. Though he studied law, he never practised, resolving, in spite of the opposition of his kindred, to give himself to literature. He went to New York, formed friendships with several

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

congenial literary men, and established the *Monthly Magazine and American Register*, which lived a year. In that city between the years 1798 and 1801 he wrote and published six novels. After his return to Philadelphia, he edited for five years the *Literary Magazine and American Register;* from 1806 to his death he was editor of the *American Register.* Besides this, Brown did various kinds of hackwork in order to support himself; for the profession of letters was then even more precarious than it is now. At the age of thirty-nine, after a life-long struggle with disease, the novelist died in his native city.

His Novels.—Of the six novels, or romances, of Charles Brockden Brown, the most important are *Wieland, Ormond, Arthur Mervyn,* and *Edgar Huntley. Wieland, or The Transformation,* is a story about the dreadful effect of a mysterious voice upon a respectable man in Pennsylvania, who is driven to murder his family in obedience to what he believes to be

a divine command. The voice turns out to be that of a malicious ventriloquist. The deluded man dies a victim to madness and remorse. Much space in the novel is given to a discussion of ventriloquism, spontaneous combustion, and the elixir of life, themes which strongly appealed to the creepy imagination of that age. *Ormond* and *Arthur Mervyn* are interesting to-day chiefly because of the vivid pictures they contain of the yellow-fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793. The plots are concerned with the deception of trusting maidens by attractive libertines, as in British models of the day like Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, and are over-wrought and generally unnatural; but the ghastly accounts of scenes in the plague-stricken city and the sufferings of yellow-fever victims are horribly realistic. In reading these descriptions, one is reminded of Defoe's account of the plague in London, though Brown's portrayal of conditions in the American city in that fearful epidemic year of 1793 is invested with more of weirdness and horror.

Of all his novels *Edgar Huntley, or Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*, is most distinctively American, for in this story Brown introduces the Indians and the wonders of the primeval forest. The scene is in western Pennyslvania; here in a mountainous region Huntley supplies food to an accused murderer. This Huntley happens to be a sleep-walker, though he does not know it. One night he awakens in a cave, all covered with bruises and half-starved, and climbing out looks straight into a panther's eyes gleaming in the darkness. He brains the beast with his tomahawk and makes a meal on it. At the mouth of the cave he comes upon several Indians with a captive white girl in the midst of them; he kills the sentinel, rescues the girl and takes her to a cabin, and slays the pursuing savages. Incidents like this are far more appealing to the reader than the plot proper with its morbid analysis of murders and madness. Over-strained as these adventures among the Indians are, they nevertheless afford the first romantic insight into the possi-

bilities of a theme which Cooper was soon to seize upon with marked success.

The plot of any typical novel by Brown is loose, consisting of a series of incidents strung together as the strange adventures of one person. As the name indicates, each is a one-man novel in which the hero contends with some uncanny and semi-occult force—ventriloquism, an epidemic, somnambulism. The story is told either in letter form or in direct narrative by the principal character. The atmosphere is melancholy, as in the Gothic romances of the day in England; the mysterious and the terrible invest the pages like a pall, and the novelist's attempts to explain the puzzles are generally unsatisfactory as well as crudely inartistic. Brown, at his best, is as realistic as Defoe, but he is distinctly inferior to Hawthorne and Poe in the handling of his somber material; the gloom is unrelieved by the subtle poetic suggestiveness of these later masters; the weirdness lacks the softening effect which Hawthorne gained by dealing with a romantic past and Poe by detaching his scenes from local and familiar backgrounds. Brown boldly and, as he himself says, with deliberate purpose, laid his scenes in a definite American locality of his own time; and accordingly, while there is something incongruous about "Gothic" horrors in a Pennsylvania setting, we have at least the display of a vigorous imagination and good patches of local color.

Charles Brockden Brown was our first professional man of letters; his time and energy he gave entirely to literary effort; this, apart from the considerable merits of his works, entitles him to remembrance. His novels attracted the favorable comment of Sir Walter Scott and the poet Shelley; in his own generation these stories were widely read, and even in this day of innumerable novels they have not altogether lost their appeal to the imaginative reader. In these pioneer romances we find a vivid picture of an American city in time of a great epidemic, the atmosphere of the primeval forest, and the

American Indian first introduced into our fiction. Brown is therefore a predecessor of Cooper and Simms.

Other Writers of the Period.—Besides the writers already considered, there are a few names which, in so brief a work as this, can only be mentioned in passing, with a word or two of comment.

In the South were the following: HENRY LAURENS, of South Carolina, president of the Continental Congress and a peace commissioner between America and Great Britain, whose *Narrative of his Confinement in the Tower of London* (1782) is an exceedingly readable journal; DAVID RAMSAY, a patriotic physician of Charleston, South Carolina, who wrote a *History of the American Revolution* and a *History of South Carolina*, and other historical works; JOHN MARSHALL, of Virginia, the great jurist, who wrote an able and elaborate *Life of Washington* (1807); "PARSON" WEEMS, of Virginia, an interesting and imaginative biographer, in whose *Life of Washington* we find the "cherry-tree incident"; WILLIAM WIRT, whose *Life of Patrick Henry* (1817) is one of the most entertaining biographies in our literature, and in whose *Letters of the British Spy* (1803) we find the famous description of "the blind preacher"; ST. GEORGE TUCKER, of Virginia, lawyer and poet, whose "Resignation, or Days of My Youth," is one of the most pleasing lyrics of the time; and HUGH HENRY BRACKENRIDGE, of Maryland and Pennsylvania, author of a poetical drama, *The Battle of Bunker Hill* (1776), and a prose satire, *Modern Chivalry*, which was immensely popular in its day. This burlesque which has been called a "Western Don Quixote," is about the adventures of Captain Farrago and his Irish servant, Teague O'Regan, and illustrates the mental cleverness of Brackenridge, who was preacher, politician, editor, jurist, and satirist.

In the North, besides those already discussed, we find the following writers: MERCY OTIS WARREN, sister of James Otis and an interesting and accomplished woman, whose dramatic poems, satires, and *History of the American Revolution*, were once much admired; JOSEPH DENNIE, author of a series of essays entitled *The Lay Preacher* and editor of *The Portfolio*, established in Philadelphia (1801); FISHER AMES, of Massachusetts, orator and essayist; ROBERT TREAT PAINE, of Boston, author of *The Ruling Passion* and other poems; ROYALL TYLER, also of Massachusetts, writer of comedies, one of which, *The Contrast* (1790), made a decided hit, and of a romance of adventure, *The Algerine Captive;* and WILLIAM DUNLAP, of New York, artist and author, who wrote several comedies and tragedies, among which the historical drama, *André*, is the most important. Dunlap also wrote a valuable history of the American stage and an interesting life of his friend, Charles Brockden Brown, the novelist.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1765-1815)

LITERATURE

PROSE

Oratory: James Otis, Samuel Adams, Richard Henry Lee, Patrick Henry

Political Essays: John Adams, Thomas Paine, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790): Autobiography, Poor Richard's Almanac

John Woolman's Journal

Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810): Wieland, Edgar Huntley, etc. First important novelist and first professional man of letters in America

POETRY

Philip Freneau (1752-1832): Eutaw Springs, Indian Burying Ground, Wild Honeysuckle, etc. First important American poet

Hartford Wits: Trumbull, Dwight, Barlow

Patriotic Songs and Ballads: Hail Columbia, Hale in the Bush, Star-Spangled Banner

HISTORY

British Stamp Act passed, 1765

First Continental Congress, Philadelphia, 1774

Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death" speech, 1775

Battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, 1775

Declaration of Independence, 1776

Surrender of Cornwallis, 1781

Treaty of Paris (Peace between Great Britain and United States), 1783

Adoption of Constitution of United States, 1787

Washington inaugurated first President, 1789

Whitney Invents Cotton Gin, 1793

Purchase of Louisiana Territory, 1803

Lewis and Clarke Expedition to West, 1804

Fulton's Steamboat on Hudson, 1807

Second War with Great Britain, 1812-'15

Patriotic Oratory and Political Essay; the Beginnings of a National Literature; Poems and Novels on American scenes and Indians.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Fiske's American Revolution and Critical Period of American History, Hart's Formation of the Union, Walker's The Making

of the Nation, Fisher's Struggle for American Independence, "American Statesmen" series of biographies.

Literary.—Tyler's Literary History of the American Revolution (Putnam), Sears's American Literature in the Colonial and National Periods, Loshe's The Early American Novel, Cairns's Early American Writers (Macmillan), Trent's Southern Writers (Macmillan), Marble's Heralds of American Literature (University Chicago Press).

Selections from the writers mentioned in the text may be found in Cairns's, Stedman and Hutchinson's Library of American Literature (vols. II, III, IV), Carpenter's American Prose (Macmillan), Library of Oratory (vol. III), The World's Famous Orators (vol. VIII), Stevenson's Poems of American History (Houghton), Moore's Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution, Eggleston's American War Ballads.

Social.—Scudder's Men and Manners in America One Hundred Years Ago, Women of Colonial and Revolutionary Times (Scribners), Green's Pioneer Mothers of America, Cooper's The Spy and The Pilot, Kennedy's Horse-Shoe Robinson, Simms's The Scout and The Partisan, Ford's Janice Meredith, Mitchell's Hugh Wynne, Churchill's Richard Carvel, Mary Johnston's Lewis Rand, Thompson's Alice of Old Vincennes.

CHAPTER THREE

THE KNICKERBOCKER OR NEW YORK GROUP

National Expansion.—The second war with Great Britain ended in 1815, and the stability of the American republic was assured. Now began a period of remarkable national expansion. In 1819 the great region of Florida was purchased from Spain. To the original thirteen states as many more had been added by 1837; the great West had been explored and was now being settled; the influx of foreign immigration had begun; the older towns of the eastern part of the country were becoming large cities, and along the rivers and lakes farther west towns and forts were dotting the wilderness. Within the thirty years from 1810 to 1840 the population had grown from about seven to seventeen millions. This material advancement was immensely stimulated by important inventions which increased the means of transportation and thus bound the different sections of the country together industrially. In 1807 Fulton launched his steamboat on the Hudson; the first railroad in America was in operation in 1830; a few years later Morse put up his telegraph wires. Meanwhile the Erie Canal had been opened and many government roads had been built. The American people were busy at their tasks of national development. The frontiers were pushed farther back, and the Indian steadily yielded possession, after fierce and bloody conflict, to the advancing "pale face." For the first twenty-five years of the new century Virginians sat in the presidential chair and her statesmen had the largest share in shaping the policies of the young nation.

New York Becomes a Literary Center.—In the Colonial Period, as we have seen, the literary leadership belonged to Boston; later, Philadelphia became the intellectual center,

gaining prestige from the writings of Benjamin Franklin and Charles Brockden Brown; during the second and third decades of the nineteenth century New York came into prominence as a literary center. This primacy in letters was due to the activity of the "Knickerbocker Group," so named in honor of the old Dutch settlers of New York, or Manhattan, whom Irving delightfully depicted in his humorous *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, published in 1809. These writers formed a congenial society, and by their steadfast devotion to their art did much toward relieving American literature of the charge of provincialism. In 1820 Sidney Smith, the witty Englishman, ironically asked, "Who reads an American book?" A few years later there was no point in such a question, for the works of Irving and Cooper were popular in Europe. The three great names of the Knickerbocker Group are Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant; the minor writers are the poets, Paulding, Halleck, Drake, Dana, and Willis. Before considering these, however, it will be well to glance briefly at the English literature of the day, the influence of which was felt in varying degrees on this side of the Atlantic.

Contemporary English Literature.—For the first twenty-five years of the century the Romantic School of writers flourished in all their glory in England. The poets were Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge; nature, medieval and oriental romance, lowly life, childhood, mystic visions of human brotherhood and social redemption, were some of the themes of their songs. Emotion and imagination were restored to their rightful places in English poetry. In widespread popularity the greatest name of the period was Sir Walter Scott, "Wizard of the North," whose novels affected American literature more perceptibly than his poetry did. The first of these great romances, *Waverley*, was published in 1814, and from that time until his death in 1832 Sir Walter Scott wielded the power of an enchanter in the English-speaking

world. Irving and Cooper show traces of his influence. To the works of Wordsworth and Byron the poets of the New York group are more or less indebted; for while their best utterances have an American flavor refreshing in its newness, the manner and the subject matter are at times unmistakably reminiscent of the great English Romantic poets. The influence of the English essayists of the period, Lamb and DeQuincey, is less perceptible in our early national prose; indeed, it seems that the eighteenth century masters, Addison and Goldsmith, are more clearly reflected in our first standard American prose writer, Washington Irving. As we study the lives and works of this first national group of literary Americans, however, we shall find how futile it is to attempt to "explain" genius by stressing outside influences.

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859)

His Life.—Washington Irving was born in New York City in 1783, the son of a Scotch father and an English mother. His father, a prosperous hardware merchant, had a good library and in this the boy browsed at his will. He was fond of the theater, and he managed to see many plays in spite of the paternal disapproval of such vanities; both in his liking for the theater and for books of romance, it was no doubt his mother who mainly supported him. Being somewhat frail, young Irving did not attend Columbia College as did his brothers, but spent his time reading or exploring the region about his native city and along the Hudson, which he was one day to make famous. His schooling was therefore irregular, but what he missed in formal training he made up in knowledge gained from unusually wide reading. He studied law but did not find it to his taste and, though admitted to the bar, did not practise. Fond of pleasure, he was a welcome guest at social gatherings; and a lover of literature, he early tried his hand at writing letters for a local paper in the manner of Addison's *Spectator* and Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*. Later, in connection with one of his brothers and James K. Paulding, he published a semi-monthly periodical called *Salmagundi*,[1] made up of sketches and essays in the Addisonian fashion. Meanwhile, he had spent nearly two years in Europe for his health.

[1] A med'ley, or miscellaneous collection; originally, a dish of various ingredients.

In 1809 Matilda Hoffman, the young lady to whom Irving was engaged, died; as a means of distraction, he worked steadily at his *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, already begun, and published it in December of the same year. To the memory of this beautiful young woman, whose death was his one great sorrow, he remained true through the rest of his long life.

For several years Irving's plans were somewhat unsettled: he cared little for law, and the hardware business of his brothers did not offer very congenial employment; finally, however, he decided to become a partner in the firm. He was the traveling member, representing their interests in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington; in these cities he was a popular social figure. During the War of 1812 he was a military secretary and governor's aid. In 1815 he went to England to look after the interests of the firm and to visit his brother. The visit, planned for a few months, lasted seventeen years. The firm of Irving Brothers failed in 1818, and Washington Irving decided to devote himself to literature. In these seventeen years of foreign residence he wrote the greater part of his books, visited Sir Walter Scott and other eminent literary men, held a position with the American embassy at Madrid, and acted as secretary of the American legation at London. He went to Spain upon the invitation of the American minister to aid in translating certain historical documents from the journals of Columbus; the romance of Spanish history and legend made a strong appeal to him and furnished material for several works. In England he was honored with a medal by the Royal Society of Literature and the degree of Doctor of Civil Law by the University of Oxford.

Irving returned to America in 1832, rich in honors and in the affections of his countrymen. A public banquet was given him by the city of New York, and a toast was drunk to his fame as "the Dutch Herodotus, Diedrich Knickerbocker," in humorous recognition of his first important work years before. After a tour of the South and the West, Irving settled down at his newly purchased estate, Sunnyside, near Tarrytown on the Hudson, once owned by a Dutch family, the Van Tassels. Ten years later (1842) he was appointed Minister to Spain, and held the position until 1846. At Sunnyside he spent in literary work and in charming social intercourse the remaining years of his life, surrounded by his youthful nieces and congenial friends. Irving died in 1859, and was buried in Sleepy Hollow cemetery near Sunnyside.

His Personality.—A lovable, genial, companionable man was Washington Irving, according to those who knew him

WASHINGTON IRVING

well, winning friends wherever he went by his cordial manners. "His smile was exceedingly genial, lighting up his whole face and rendering it very attractive," says a relative of his. "There was a chirping, cheery, old-school air in his appearance," says George William Curtis. "He seemed, indeed, to have stepped out of his own books; and the cordial grace and humor of his address, if he stopped for a passing chat, were delightfully characteristic. He was simply free from all self-consciousness and assumption and dogmatism." Of his own

SUNNYSIDE
Irving's Home on the Hudson River

gentle art he said: "I have never found in anything outside of the four walls of my study any enjoyment equal to sitting at my writing desk, with a clean page, a new theme, and a mind wide awake." Singular purity of character, something of old-fashioned sentiment in his chivalric regard for womanhood, a humor seasoned with a grain of shrewdness, wide human sympathy,—these suggest themselves to the reader of Irving's works as belonging to the man. "God bless him!" exclaimed

Byron in a rare burst of admiration, "he is a genius; and he has something better than genius—a heart."

His Works.—The works of Irving fall into two general groups: (1) **Sketches and Tales;** (2) **Biographies and Histories.** In the first group, exclusive of his earlier essays in the Goldsmith and Addison manner—the *Oldstyle Papers* and *Salmagundi*, immature performances,—are the *Sketch Book*, *Bracebridge Hall*, *Tales of a Traveller*, *The Alhambra*, and a volume or two of travels in the western part of the United States. To the second group belong the *Life of Columbus*, *The Conquest of Granada*, *Life of Goldsmith*, *Mahomet and his Successors*, and *Life of Washington*. Belonging in strictness to neither of these groups, though more nearly akin to the first, is the burlesque *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, Irving's first important contribution to literature.

Knickerbocker's History of New York (1809) purports to be an account of the Dutch settlement and rule of New York (New Amsterdam), from the time of Henry Hudson (1609) to the English occupation in 1664, by one Diedrich Knickerbocker, a descendant of the old Dutch families. This fictitious person, it was pretended, had mysteriously disappeared from New York leaving a manuscript, the publication of which—so the clever newspaper advertisements of the forthcoming book assured the public—would be undertaken to pay certain debts of the eccentric author. The curiosity of the public was thus aroused and the book had a large sale; it was soon known, however, that Irving was the real author. He began the book, indeed, as a parody on an exceedingly dull and pedantic history of New York which had appeared two years before, but became so deeply interested in the undertaking that he soon set diligently to work to reproduce in an amusing form the earlier traditions of his native city. The result was a comic history of New York "from the beginning of the world to the end of the Dutch dynasty." The work is a compound of fact and fiction, subtle humor and broad burlesque; the Dutch

governors mentioned are historical characters, but the sketches of them by Irving are delightful pieces of imaginative portraiture. The description of Governor Wouter Van Twiller has become classic:

> The renowned Wouter (or Walter) Van Twiller was descended from a long line of Dutch burgomasters, who had successively dozed away their lives, and grown fat upon the bench of magistracy in Rotterdam; and who had comported themselves with such singular wisdom and propriety, that they were never either heard or talked of—which, next to being universally applauded, should be the object of ambition of all magistrates and rulers. There are two opposite ways by which some men make a figure in the world: one by talking faster than they think, and the other, by holding their tongues and never thinking at all. By the first, many a smatterer acquires the reputation of a man of quick parts; by the other, many a dunderpate, like the owl, the stupidest of birds, comes to be considered the very type of wisdom. This, by the way, is a casual remark, which I would not, for the universe, have it thought I apply to Governor Van Twiller. It is true he was a man shut up within himself, like an oyster, and rarely spoke, except in monosyllables; but then it was allowed he seldom said a foolish thing. So invincible was his gravity that he was never known to laugh or even to smile through the whole course of a long and prosperous life. Nay, if a joke were uttered in his presence, that set light-minded hearers in a roar, it was observed to throw him into a state of perplexity. . .
>
> With all his reflective habits, he never made up his mind on a subject. His adherents accounted for this by the astonishing magnitude of his ideas. He conceived every subject on so grand a scale that he had not room in his head to turn it over and examine both sides of it. Certain it is, that, if any matter were propounded to him on which ordinary mortals would rashly determine at first glance, he would put on a vague, mysterious look, shake his capacious head, smoke some time in profound silence, and at length observe, that he 'had his doubts about the matter'; which gained him the reputation of a man slow of belief and not easily imposed upon. His habits were as regular as his person. He daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve of the twenty-four.

This sort of satire, though comparatively stingless, offended some of the worthy Dutchman's descendants, who on such a

subject were unduly sensitive; in England the humor of it all was greatly applauded, Sir Walter Scott declaring that his "sides were absolutely sore with laughing." Indeed, *Knickerbocker's History of New York* was the first American book to receive wide attention abroad, and its popularity has deservedly continued, in spite of the greater fame of Irving's next work, the *Sketch Book*.

Sketches and Tales. The *Sketch Book* (1819) was written in England, published in New York and Philadelphia in parts, then brought out in England in two volumes by Murray, the famous publisher, upon the recommendation of Sir Walter Scott. As soon as the public read the first part, which contained "Rip Van Winkle," they clamored for more; on both sides of the Atlantic so favorable was the reception, that the author's reputation was established in two continents. The book was an open sesame for Irving to the homes and hearts of men of letters in England and, indeed, of readers everywhere. The pictures of English country life more clearly revealed England to America and endeared the writer to the older country, while the purely American scenes charmed European readers and surprised the people at home, who were not aware of the wealth of literary material so close at hand.

Of all the sketches and tales in the collection two have found the most abiding favor, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"; it would hardly be too much to say that these two stories have kept the *Sketch Book* alive, have floated it, so to speak, on the popular current. Other sketches—"The Wife," "The Broken Heart," "Little Britain," "Christmas Eve," "Westminster Abbey,"—charm the cultivated reader by their old-time sentiment and their style; "The Spectre Bridegroom" is a little too "Gothic" for most modern readers; but Rip's strange experiences with Henry Hudson's queer dwarfs and Ichabod Crane's troubled courtship of Katrina Van Tassel are sufficiently thrilling and human to divert a generation brought up on highly spiced literary food. Besides,

these two stories deal with American material, the "Knickerbocker" and Hudson legends, and their setting involves the Catskills and the majestic river up which the Dutch navigator sailed. In the *Sketch Book*, then, the world found fresh matter and an altogether delightful manner; the author's fame and fortune were accordingly secure. The demand for more of such entertainment led him to continue this kind of writing.

Bracebridge Hall (1822) and *Tales of a Traveller* (1824) are of the same general nature as the *Sketch Book*, but somewhat inferior in vitality. In *Bracebridge Hall* there is a thin thread of story on which are strung little incidents and bits of description, the most clever of which are perhaps "The Stout Gentleman" and "Dolph Heyliger." Some of Irving's best writing is found in the *Tales of a Traveller*, but it lacks as a whole the freshness of the *Sketch Book*; then, too, it deals with continental scenes, with the spirit of which the author was not entirely familiar and in which his readers were not deeply interested. By the time he had finished this third book of sketches, he had about exhausted the vein. Fortunately for him and for his readers as well, whose name was legion, a new field opened when he went to Spain in 1826.

The romantic past of Spain made a strong appeal to Irving, and for three years he reveled in the records and ruins of her vanished glories. Around the Alhambra, the old Moorish palace of Granada, his imagination played; he actually lived in it for a while, and under the spell of it he wrote another volume of sketches. *The Alhambra* (1832) has been aptly called "the Spanish Sketch Book." It is the most poetic of Irving's books: visions of departed splendors came to this American as he sat musing in his little balcony, and he peopled every court and tower with beings whom his fancy revived out of the old legends; around each incident in the quaint city of Granada, about each pretty face or striking figure, he wove some romantic story; and looking out upon the moonlit gardens he dreamed, until the place became one of enchantment

and he could see fairy forms through the trees and hear faint whisperings of love. And yet he so mingles fact and fancy in these pictures, that *The Alhambra* is realistic as well as romantic, reflecting the life of all that region and making for the traveler of to-day an admirable guidebook.

In addition to the volumes of sketches and tales already mentioned, Irving wrote several works of minor importance on his observations while making an extensive trip through the newly-opened West after his return from Europe in 1832. These papers, first called *A Tour on the Prairies*, were later published with additions as the *Crayon Miscellany* (1835). Two other works belong to this period, the *Astoria* and the *Adventures of Captain Bonneville.* The *Astoria* was undertaken at the request of John Jacob Astor, who prevailed upon Irving to write a readable history of certain mercantile ventures which Astor was making on the Pacific coast. The clerical part of this work appears to have been done by Irving's nephew, Pierre Irving. The *Adventures of Captain Bonneville* relate the western experiences of an adventurer of that name whom Irving had met while he was preparing the *Astoria.* These exploits had already been written out by Captain Bonneville; Irving retouched them, after buying the manuscript, and published the work as a commercial venture. Compared with his other sketches these papers are little more than clever hackwork.

Biographies and Histories. Irving's first book on a Spanish theme was the *Life of Columbus* (1828). The career and personality of the great discoverer had always interested him, and when he began to read in earnest the old Spanish chronicles which he had gone to Spain to translate, he decided to write a biography of his hero. He had the energy to make a careful study of the musty documents bearing on the life of Columbus, and so he gained substantial accuracy; but what, for literary purposes, is still more important, he possessed the imagination to reconstruct the past and make his chief character a living

reality. Of the *Life of Columbus* Irving said that it had cost him more toil and trouble than all his other productions. The work is in the main trustworthy as history, but it is still more noteworthy for its vivid and sympathetic portrayal of the splendid dreamer who discovered a continent.

The Conquest of Granada (1829) is an account by an imaginary monk, Fray Agapida, in chronicle form, of the conflicts between the Moors and the Spaniards centering about the old Moorish stronghold of Granada, which fell after a ten years' struggle, in 1492. It is a book of fascinating pictures of combats, tournaments, sieges, cavalcades, and gorgeous processions, in which the romantic figures of Ferdinand and Isabella are prominent. In the brilliant descriptions is the mingled coloring of Spanish chivalry and Oriental pageantry. It is more like a moving masquerade in a medieval carnival than a deadly war between the partisans of the Cross and the fanatics of the Crescent. Such a theme was thoroughly congenial to Irving, who is said to have regarded *The Conquest of Granada* as the best of his works, though agreeing with the critics that the device of relating the story through the mouth of the fictitious Fray Agapida was a mistake.

The *Life of Goldsmith* (1849) is the most interesting of the later works of Irving. It was rather hastily written and can lay no great claim to originality, but it is a charming biography of a man with whom his American admirer had much of sympathy. The gentle humor, the Bohemian temperament, and the unfailing cheerfulness of Goldsmith appealed to Irving, who, though not himself a true Bohemian, had such inclinations at least; and as for the Englishman's other qualities—to say nothing of his delightful style—it is easy to see that they are Irving's also. Generations of readers have come to know the English essayist and poet through this biography, which keeps its popularity among famous American classics. Irving's *Life of Goldsmith* is one of the books which every boy and girl

should read; it is as entertaining as a novel, and in its genial human quality it is genuinely wholesome.

Mahomet and his Successors (1849) is a popular history of Mohammedanism, written in Irving's usual pleasing style, but it is the least vital of the author's histories. The subject was not one with which he was fitted either by temperament or training to deal successfully; the work is therefore distinctly inferior to the other biographies.

The last of the works of Irving, and the one on which he bestowed long and loving care, is the *Life of Washington* (1855-'59) originally published in five volumes. It is an elaborate and painstaking study of Washington and the American Revolution, an undertaking which Irving had in mind off and on for thirty years before it was actually accomplished. His motive was patriotic and personal. There was a certain sentimental interest in the name of a man for whom he himself was named. The story of how his nurse followed the great man into a shop one day, soon after he became President, is a familiar one: "Please, your honor," said she, "here's a bairn was named after you." The stately Virginian put his hand on the child's head and gave him his blessing. "The touch could not have been more efficacious," says Charles Dudley Warner,[1] "though it might have lingered longer, if he had known he was propitiating his future biographer." And so, as his final labor, Irving wrought out this voluminous *Life of Washington* and left it to his countrymen. It is in a sense both a tribute and a legacy.

Literary Characteristics and Contribution.—Irving's works perfectly reflect his personality. Indeed, it is this diffusion of himself through his writings that gives them their charm. He is not critical, but placidly reflective, painting his portraits in an atmosphere of sunshine, now and then faintly darkened with a light, passing cloud of melancholy. Gentle humor and amiable sentiment are the prevailing qualities in his most

[1] *Life of Washington Irving*, p. 23.

representative productions. He is best in shorter sketches of personal character; even in his longer works, like *Knickerbocker's History of New York*, which is a sustained piece of romance, the patches of description and portraiture are the most interesting parts. Consequently, his genius found adequate expression in books of sketches and tales, such as the *Sketch Book*, *Tales of a Traveller*, and *The Alhambra*, rather than in long narratives, in which keen analysis and sustained thought are more necessary. What he lacked in vigor and incisiveness he made up in lucidity and grace. Temperamentally, and therefore in his style, he is kin to Goldsmith and Addison, whose writings his own often suggest. It is in truth a delightful style, and it wears well; one may read it without weariness; it is a "well of English undefiled," bubbling out of his own genial soul.

The contribution of Irving to American literature is important. In the first place, he is in a sense the father of our literature; for he was the first American to win international fame as purely a man of letters. His writings caused European nations to realize that there was such a thing as American literature, notwithstanding the fact that much of his subject matter is foreign; this was to be expected, however, in the writing of a man who spent over twenty years of his life abroad and to whose artistic temperament old-world scenes and themes were naturally congenial.

In the second place, he is a pioneer in that art of short-story writing which constitutes one of the chief glories of American literature. The tales of Irving are not genuine short stories, as we now understand that form of literature perfected by Poe and Hawthorne and in which compression, unity, and final climax are necessary; strictly speaking, they are what he called them, sketches,—loosely constructed little narratives, relieved by bits of description and proceeding in a leisurely manner. Such stories as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," though lacking the clear-cut form of a

modern short story as defined and originated by Poe, are the first forerunners of the numerous tribe; indeed, in point of interest and in literary quality, they are superior to hosts of their latter-day successors.

In the third place, Irving created the fascinating "Knickerbocker Legend" and invested the historic Hudson with the glamour of romance. This is his most distinctive contribution to literature. That region had long been waiting for a magician to evoke from its valleys the spirits of its musty traditions. This Irving did when, as Diedrich Knickerbocker, he rehabilitated the Dutch governors, the men and women of vanished New Amsterdam, and created Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane. To give New York a picturesque background of tradition and thereby to reflect a charming bit of American local color, was in truth no inconsiderable achievement. This the Old World promptly recognized.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that Irving was the first American to import into our literature the romantic legends and history of Spain, that country under whose flag Columbus sailed and from which explorers came to our southern shores. Certainly no one else has more attractively recreated for us the atmosphere of that richly storied past. For all these contributions Irving's place is secure. He is not one of the great writers of the world, but within his limits he is a joy to a steady stream of readers; his pleasing prose is a delight to cultivated minds and should be a model to youthful writers.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1789-1851)

His Life.—James Fenimore Cooper, the first great romancer of the forest and the sea in American literature, was born at Burlington, New Jersey, in 1789. When he was less than a year old his father moved to what is now Cooperstown on Otsego Lake. This region was then a wilderness, and here amid the primitive conditions of a backwoods settlement the boy was brought up. At a local school he was prepared for Yale College, which he entered in 1802 before he was fourteen. He was a poor student; besides, in his junior year he indulged in some college

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

pranks which the authorities judged to be sufficient cause for his dismissal. His father, a man of some prominence socially and politically, decided to get his son into the navy; as there was then no naval academy, young Cooper was in 1806 entered as a sailor on a vessel about to sail for England and the Mediterranean, as the beginning of his apprenticeship. In two years he became midshipman, was a little later detailed to aid in the construction of a brig on Lake Ontario, and during the next two years he saw considerable service at sea. In 1811 he married, and as his wife objected to the prolonged absences from home which his vocation involved, he resigned from the navy after serving about four years. This experience, as we shall see, stood him later in good stead as an author. The next few years he spent partly at Cooperstown and partly in Westchester county, his wife's home, doing a little farming and managing his property.

Not until 1820, when Cooper was thirty, had he done any literary work, nor, indeed, had he shown any inclination that way. One day he was reading to his wife a new English society novel; laying the book down, he remarked that he could write a better novel than that himself. He was challenged to do so; whereupon he set to work and before the

end of that same year of 1820 he published a novel called *Precaution*, dealing with English social life. Of this Cooper certainly knew very little, for he had spent only a few days in London while he was in the navy, and he must therefore have gained his knowledge from books. *Precaution* has little value, and as far as the general public was concerned it had small success; it is worth noting, however, that it was reprinted in England, where the reviewers, strangely enough, assumed that the author was an English woman. As a first attempt, this was not so bad after all, and the author was encouraged by his friends, despite the indifferent success of his venture, to try his hand at an American theme. They argued that if he could write on a subject he knew nothing about, he would make a hit with a subject drawn from familiar scenes. He had heard the story of a spy in the Revolutionary War whose exploits belonged to the very county in which he was then living. Out of this grew his first romance, *The Spy*, published in 1821. This was the beginning of his long series of stories, of which a detailed account will presently be given.

In 1826 Cooper, now a successful and famous man of letters, went to Europe, where he spent the next seven years. His longest stay was in France, though he lived some time in England, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy; of all these countries, Italy most appealed to his romantic nature. During these years abroad he was busy at his writing, producing six or seven books, several of which have European settings. He was treated with distinguished regard everywhere, for his books were popular, and in France he was lionized. At a reception in Paris he met Scott, then in the zenith of fame. Cooper observed with irritation the ignorance of Europeans about America and the hurtful misconceptions growing out of it, especially in England, where he expected to find more accurate information in regard to the kin across the sea. On the other hand, he saw more clearly the crudeness and self-complacency of his own countrymen in comparison with the refinement and culture of the older civilization of Europe. In order to set forth his views and to help both sides—to cure the ignorance of the one and the bad manners of the other—he wrote a book, *Notions of the Americans Picked up by a Travelling Bachelor* (1828), composed of a number of letters purporting to be from an English traveler in the United States. As might be expected, this work was pleasing to neither side, and was the beginning of the adverse criticism of Cooper which, after his return to America, grew into the most famous series of quarrels in the history of American authorship.

Cooper returned to America in 1833, and the remaining eighteen years of his life were embittered by controversies and libel suits. The story

of these quarrels forms a considerable chapter in his life,[1] but in this brief sketch it is not worth while to attempt any detailed account of his troubles, which, after all, have nothing to do with an appreciation of his novels. Stated in a few words, the situation was this: Cooper wrote a pamphlet and three more or less satirical works, in which he replied to criticisms on his novels, commented rather caustically on the faults of his countrymen, and attacked the press; he also published *A History of the Navy of the United States*, which displeased the partisans of two rival claimants for the chief honors of the battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812. The newspapers took up the hue and cry against the novelist, and he promptly sued one after another for libel and won most of the suits. Meanwhile some of his fellow townsmen at Cooperstown had cut down a certain fine tree on his estate and had otherwise abused the privilege of using the grounds along the lake as a park; thereupon, Cooper forbade the use of the grounds. He was denounced and his books removed from the public library of the town.

For years he was the most unpopular literary man in America. In spite of this, however, he continued to write novels, and several of his best works were issued during these troubled years. Even his enemies read his romances with delight; Thurlow Weed, for instance, whom Cooper was suing for an editorial in his paper, sat up all night to finish *The Pathfinder* which had just appeared. Much of this criticism was unjust to Cooper, but his infirmities of temper invited and prolonged the attacks. So keenly did he feel the injustice done him, that on his deathbed he requested his family not to assist in the preparation of any biography. He died in 1851, and was buried at Cooperstown. A noble monument, crowned by a statue of his great character, "Leatherstocking," overlooks Otsego Lake which he invested with the colors of romance.

His Personality.—Cooper was a man of strong convictions, independence of mind, and an irascible temper. He impressed strangers as proud and self-assertive; the poet Bryant, one of his warmest friends, speaks of "being somewhat startled . . . . with a certain emphatic frankness in his manner," when he first met him. He made a few devoted friends, and he seems to have had a genius for making enemies. This last was due to an apparently incurable habit of telling people unpleasant truths. When they showed irritation and called him names,

[1] See Lounsbury's *Life of Cooper* ("American Men of Letters"), chaps. viii-xi.

he promptly sued them for libel. His intentions were good, but his method was unfortunate. In a word, he lacked tact. In manner he was doubtless somewhat arrogant and overbearing. He was, moreover, extremely sensitive, and promptly resented the criticisms of his enemies. Whatever these may have said, however, he was an honest and upright man; he loved and practised sincerity, though in a militant fashion. He was ever a fighter. It was quite characteristic of him, for instance, to act as his own counsel in several of the numerous libel suits against editors; in the famous trial which followed the publication of his history of the navy, Cooper conducted his own case and spoke for six hours with telling effect; indeed, he seldom lost a case.

Weaknesses of temper he certainly had, and he was wanting in that sense of humor which keeps a man from taking either himself or his enemies too seriously; but these, after all, are not faults of character. Fearlessness and truthfulness are mentioned by Professor Lounsbury as leading traits in Cooper. The thoughtful reader of his life and works will agree with his biographer's assertion that America "counts on the scanty roll of her men of letters the name of no one who acted from purer patriotism or loftier principle."

His Romances.—The complete works of Cooper, as originally published, number something like one hundred volumes. These include history, biography, reviews, travel, controversial pamphlets, magazine articles, and over thirty novels. Of his thirty-odd novels, or, more properly speaking, romances, fewer than half belong to the world's great works of fiction. For the purposes of this brief history it is best to confine ourselves to an account of his most representative novels, those which still hold their own as vital contributions to American literature. The romances, exclusive of several satirical novels of little value, fall into three classes—historical, sea tales, and romances of the forest. Of the historical novels, *The Spy* (1821), *Lionel Lincoln* (1825), and *Mercedes of Castile* (1840),

are representative; *The Pilot* (1824), *The Red Rover* (1828), *The Water-Witch* (1830), and *The Two Admirals* (1842), are stories of the sea; the important frontier tales are, in the order of publication, *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840), and *The Deerslayer* (1841).

Of all the romances eight are by common consent the greatest, and on these eight posterity has based its judgment of Cooper's merits as a novelist: *The Spy*, *The Pilot*, *The Red Rover*; and the five books dealing with the adventures of a central character, Natty Bumppo, otherwise known as "Hawkeye" and "Leatherstocking." These five stories are the famous "Leatherstocking Tales," so named from the hero, whose career from youth to old age is recounted in the books arranged as follows: *The Deerslayer*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pioneers*, *The Prairie*. They should be read in this order.

A brief running comment on some of the principal romances will give a general notion of their characteristics.

The Spy is the story of Harvey Birch, who rendered valuable service to Washington's army in the Revolution. He is one of the most clear-cut characters of American fiction; so real, indeed, does Cooper make him that many readers have taken him as a veritable historical personage. As already stated, this hero was developed from certain anecdotes about a secret agent who served in the war for independence, related years before to the novelist by John Jay. *The Spy* had a surprisingly favorable reception both at home and abroad; it was translated into the principal languages of Europe, and it retains its popularity as the best of Cooper's historical romances. So doubtful was the author about the success of a book on a purely American theme, that he delayed the completion of *The Spy* for months after the first volume had been printed. To placate the publishers, who feared that the novel might be too long, Cooper wrote, paged, and had the last chapter printed while the first part of the second volume was in the

press and before the intervening chapters had even been thought out. The enthusiastic praise which greeted the work everywhere was a distinct surprise to the half-despairing novelist and his anxious publishers. An American rival to Scott had come upon the scene. With the appearance of the *Sketch Book* in 1820 and *The Spy* in 1821 American literature had begun to have a distinctive character.

"LEATHERSTOCKING" MONUMENT
Otsego Lake, N. Y.

The Pilot and *The Red Rover* are romances of the sea. The first of these was suggested to Cooper by a discussion on the merits and demerits of Scott's *The Pirate*, recently published. At a dinner party in New York in 1822, when the talk turned on the latest of the "Waverley Novels," the authorship of which had not yet been disclosed, Cooper, who had guessed the secret, maintained that the author of *The Pirate* was a landsman and not a sailor. The English novel, he thought, showed little intimate familiarity with the sea. Now Cooper had spent several years on shipboard and knew in detail the mechanism of seacraft and all the phases of a sailor's life; he accordingly decided to write a sea story. He daringly seized upon the American naval adventurer, Paul Jones, and made him, as the "Pilot,"

the hero of a fascinating narrative of Revolutionary times. Long Tom Coffin, the Nantucket whaler, is a masterly creation, while the breezy incidents and descriptions make *The Pilot* one of the liveliest sea tales ever written. Not less fascinating to those who love "blue water and a ship" and adventures on the deep is *The Red Rover*, the second and, as some would have it, the greatest of the stories of the sea.

The "Leatherstocking Tales" have been called a five-act drama in the life of the hero, Natty Bumppo. In *The Deerslayer* we have the youthful hunter on the warpath; in *The Last of the Mohicans* we find Hawkeye in his prime, the center of action; *The Pathfinder* shows us Leatherstocking in love; *The Pioneers* and *The Prairie* give us pictures of the declining years of the famous frontiersman. The two last mentioned were written earliest; then the author worked back to the youth of his hero and succeeded, strange to say, in making the series a perfect one. *The Pioneers* is the poorest of the group, lacking in action and overcrowded with descriptions; Cooper indulged too far his fondness for recording the familiar scenes of his boyhood and so paralyzed the movement of the story. Artistically considered, *The Deerslayer* and *The Pathfinder* are probably the finest of the series: the simplicity of the plots, the clear delineation of the characters, the fresh enthusiasm of the young hunter and the growing sense of loyalty in the youthful Indian, the charm of the lake and the mystic depths of the forest, the confessions of love in woodland trysting-places,—these give the two romances an atmosphere almost idyllic. *The Prairie* has more of grandeur, more of solemn beauty, than the rest: the figure of the old hunter in the vast solitudes, moving westward to escape the oncoming human tide, is invested with something of the pathos and the gloom of tragedy.

The Last of the Mohicans has ever been a prime favorite with the public. From the very first its success was almost prodigious. Europeans vied with Americans in praising it;

here, indeed, was fresh material at last, here were scenes picturing to the foreign mind pioneer America. The book came out in 1826, and permanently established Cooper's fame. Of all the "Leatherstocking Tales" *The Last of the Mohicans* has the swiftest movement; incident follows incident with thrilling and cumulative effect; spirited narration and graphic description enliven the passing panorama of the Indian-haunted forests. Read, for instance, the twenty-third chapter, if you would understand the harmony of setting with character and action so common in this romance: you feel the rush, you see the coloring, and the blood flows faster in your veins. Or, if you would be calmed by meditating on the sublime and somber aspects of nature in her more elevated moods, read the poetic descriptions in chapters fourteen and eighteen. In this work Hawkeye, or Leatherstocking, is in the fulness of his manhood: he attracts us by his vigor and resourcefulness, his dependable judgment, his moral soundness, his wonderful sagacity. We admire the loyalty and the heroism of the Indian Chingachgook and his son Uncas, somewhat idealized, no doubt; but, by way of contrast, we have plenty of bad Indians, such as the fiendish Magua. Fortunate is the youth who, in the plastic years when the imagination is still fresh, peoples his mind with these primitive dwellers in the wildwood.

Literary Characteristics and Contribution.—Cooper was first of all a good story-teller. He had something fresh and vital to tell, and he proceeded to tell it without any great concern about the laws of literary art. It is therefore easy to find fault with his workmanship. He was a hasty writer, careless in the structure of his plots and in the more delicate matters of style. Now and then, indeed, the style is slipshod and the grammar out of joint; but there is so much of movement and of color, cardinal virtues in a romance, that one readily overlooks such lapses. When the interest begins to flag because of a long stretch of description, relief is sure to come in action filled with suspense. Exciting incidents of hairbreadth escapes

keep the reader going; he may skip the descriptions, the moralizings, and the character-sketchings, and still hold to the thread of rapid narration. Cooper's descriptions, however, are remarkably fine and should not be skipped; he had a positive genius for vivid painting of forest scenes, and in his best stories the setting is an integral part of the plot.

Cooper's best-drawn characters are men of a few simple and noble traits, such as Harvey Birch, Long Tom Coffin, and Leatherstocking, in whom certain primitive motives are strong. For complex characters the novelist had apparently no great liking; direct and virile, he was no subtle analyst of sophisticated folk; men of the woods, living close to nature, he could draw. Hence the three individuals just mentioned stand out clear-cut and essentially true to life, in spite of certain inconsistencies of language and a few well-nigh impossible heroisms. His women are more or less conventional, bloodless creatures, strangely at variance with the rather athletic type in modern fiction and, indeed, with the frontier woman of the realists. It must be remembered, however, that in early nineteenth century romance the clinging, delicately beautiful maiden was fashionable; Cooper's "females" are no more inane than some of Scott's. They are stock figures, quite dependent upon the men and a little out of place in the savage-infested woods, except as affording a touch of chivalric coloring to the rough knighthood of the frontier.

As to the truthfulness of Cooper's portrayal of Indian character there has been much discussion. He chose a few good Indians and clothed them in the colors of romance; the rest he pictured as treacherous, drunken, and murderous. He certainly understood Indian nature, for he was near enough to the pioneer warfare in his own region to have heard from the mouths of witnesses the stories of Indian fights; eleven years before his birth the great Indian massacre of Cherry Valley took place near his home on Otsego Lake. Moreover, he was a diligent student of available records of Indian life,

and he saw many Indians from various tribes. Naturally he gave to the Indian as a subject of romance a certain epic largeness, a touch of idealism, in keeping with the poetic conception of a retreating race battling for its very life before the advancing pale-face hosts. And so, whether he was true to facts is of minor consequence; the thing to be remembered is that he made the people of two continents feel a new interest in the Indian.

Cooper was the first writer to give to the world the romance of the American forest. What Irving did for the Hudson River region, Cooper did for the Otsego Lake district. Charles Brockden Brown had put Indians into one of his novels, but only incidentally, as it were; it remained for Cooper to make them an essential part of fiction. Across the sea Walter Scott had won fame before the American began his forest stories, but in a few years the latter rivaled in popularity the Wizard of the North. In 1833 Morse, the inventor of the electric telegraph, wrote: "In every city of Europe that I visited the works of Cooper were conspicuously placed in the windows of every bookshop. They are published as soon as he produces them in thirty-four different places in Europe. They have been seen by American travelers in the languages of Turkey and Persia, in Constantinople, in Egypt, at Jerusalem, at Ispahan." It is safe to say that the "Leatherstocking Tales" have had a wider reading in Europe than any other series of books by an American author. Cooper was, moreover, the first American to write romantic sea tales; he created the novel of the ocean in our literature, out of his own experience. He gave us, too, the historical novel. His best work is made up from native material: when he touched the forest, the prairie, the sea, he was at home; in the larger poetry of nature he is a master, and his romances form thus far the truest epic in American literature. Along the trail he blazed, many story-tellers have passed, but no one of them has shaped with so vital a hand the crude material of pioneer days.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

His Life.—William Cullen Bryant, greatest of the poets of the "Knickerbocker Group," was born in Cummington, Massachusetts, in 1794, the son of a country physician of prominence and culture. He was of sound Puritan stock, and on his mother's side was descended from John Alden and Priscilla. In his childhood he read much in the Bible and heard it read in his home; the prayers of visiting clergymen made a deep impression on him, many of these prayers being, as he afterward said, "poems from beginning to end." Of the beautiful country of western Massachusetts he was very fond, so that he came to know intimately all the features of those picturesque landscapes. These first experiences had much to do with the making of his poetry and the determining of his ideals. His father had a good library of eighteenth century classics, and here the boy read widely. Even in his childhood he prayed that he "might receive the gift of poetic genius and write verses that might endure." In those early days his favorite poets were Pope, Blair, and Kirke White; a little later he fancied Scott and Byron, but Wordsworth soon took hold of him and remained to the end his

favorite poet. Young Bryant was prepared for college under private tutors, and at the age of sixteen entered Williams College as a sophomore. His father not being able to keep him in college, the boy left after less than a year's residence and turned to the study of law.

For the next three or four years (1811-'15) Bryant was working at his legal studies, for which, like other literary men before and since, he had no very great enthusiasm; in 1815 he was admitted to the bar, however, and for ten years practised his profession with fair success in two towns of western Massachusetts, Plainfield and Great Barrington. Meanwhile he had married and was writing poetry. Long before this, when he was only thirteen, he had written a satiric poem, "The Embargo," which had an extensive local circulation; there are verses extant, indeed, and not such bad ones either, written at the age of nine. At seventeen he wrote "Thanatopsis," but laid it away; two years later he composed the lines "To a Waterfowl"; in 1821 he read his poem, "The Ages," before the Phi Beta Kappa society at Harvard, an unusual honor certainly for a young country poet. It will be seen therefore that for the young attorney law was unequally dividing honors with literature. In fact, so great had grown his dissatisfaction with his profession, that in 1825 he gave up his practice and went to New York to become an editor.

The rest of Bryant's long life was spent in New York. He was for two or three years connected with a literary periodical there; when that failed, he was offered the position of associate editor of the New York *Evening Post*. In 1828 he became editor-in-chief of this paper, and a few years later, both editor and proprietor. For the next fifty years he directed the policies of the *Evening Post*, making it one of the most influential newspapers in America. Bryant went to Europe in 1834 and spent two years; the broadening effect of this European travel was seen both in his editorial and literary work. He made a number of other trips to Europe, besides journeys to the Orient, the West Indies, and Mexico. In 1843 he bought an estate on Long Island, near Roslyn, and there built a suburban residence; about twenty years later he acquired the old Bryant homestead at Cummington, Mass., and gave to the little town a public library. His editorial labors he varied by writing poetry, translating Homer, contributing literary articles to magazines, and making memorial addresses. On special occasions of a commemorative nature he was much in demand. The last public appearance of Bryant was in Central Park, New York, in the spring of 1878, when he made an address on the occasion of the unveiling of a statue to Mazzini, the Italian patriot. As the poet was entering the house of a friend after the exercises, he fell, striking his head on the

stones; from the effects of this fall he died in two weeks, aged eighty-four. He was buried at his country home, Roslyn, Long Island.

His Personality.—In his prime, Bryant, according to his son-in-law and biographer, Godwin, was of "medium height, spare in figure, with a clean-shaven face, unusually large head, bright eyes, and a wearied, severe, almost saturnine expression of countenance. One, however, remarked at once the exceeding gentleness of his manner, and a rare sweetness in the tone of his voice, as well as an extraordinary purity in his selection and pronunciation of English." In his old age he looked like a patriarch, with his abundant white beard and his silvery hair. He came of sturdy New England stock, and there was in the man as well as in the poet a reflection of that sturdiness, touched with a certain austerity bordering on coldness. He was singularly regular in his habits and simple in his diet; he walked to his office and back, a distance of several miles, regardless of the weather, and he was fond of long country rambles. He particularly loved to work in his garden and among his flower-beds. To this simple manner of life was due in large measure his vigorous old age.

Dignity, purity of character, calmness, reserve,—these are some of the personal traits that suggest themselves to the reader of Bryant's life and writings. He awakened respect and admiration rather than enthusiasm, more of reverence than of love. His native kindliness of spirit was somewhat obscured by his outward reserve. The Puritan element in him was strong. He was a striking figure in his later years: men are still living who recall the impressive, distinguished appearance of the venerable poet and editor in the streets of New York.

His Poetry.—Bryant's collected works consist of two volumes of prose—essays, sketches, addresses,—a translation of Homer into blank verse, and a small volume of poems. It is only as a poet, however, that he is entitled to a place among standard

authors. His prose work shows a scholarly taste and a polished style, but is not remarkable; his memorial addresses are admirable examples of formal eulogy. Bryant was a busy editor and found little time for writing verse; this will account in part for the slender product of his muse. At least one fourth of his poetry was written before he went to New York to live in 1825, and the rest was composed at irregular intervals during the next fifty-odd years. Several of his greatest poems belong to the early period.

"Thanatopsis," the most famous of Bryant's poems and the first great poem written in America, was published in the *North American Review* for September, 1817, though it had been composed six years before, when the poet was in his eighteenth year. The beginning and the ending of the poem as we now have it, first appeared in the little volume of his poems issued by the author in 1821. Young Bryant had written "Thanatopsis" and laid it away in his desk; the poet's father found it and sent it to the magazine, but the editors could hardly believe that so mature a piece had been written by a boy, and for a while persisted in attributing its authorship to the elder Bryant. During a ramble in the solitary woods in 1811 the youthful poet composed most of the now familiar lines, the title of which, "Thanatopsis," means a view or vision of death. He was of Puritan ancestry, be it remembered, and to his mind the somber aspects of nature carried a solemn message. "Thanatopsis" at once became popular: no such lines had yet been read in American literature; schoolbooks reprinted them and public speakers, particularly ministers, quoted them; soon their magnificent harmony was a possession of all serious souls.

The lines "To a Waterfowl," which many discriminating readers consider Bryant's best poem, were written when the poet was twenty-one or twenty-two, about the time he was beginning the practice of law. One December afternoon he was walking over the hills of western Massachusetts, feeling

"very forlorn and desolate," as he says in a letter; a splendid sunset was followed by a rosy afterglow, and a solitary bird was seen winging its way along the serene and lonely horizon. The lawyer-poet watched the bird until it was lost in the deepening twilight, and "then went on with new strength and courage." That night he composed the poem, "To a Waterfowl," with its comforting lesson of faith, drawn from the flight of the lone wanderer in the evening skies. It is, indeed, a noble lyric, tinged with melancholy, but deeply saturated with serene religious feeling and high beauty. Matthew Arnold, the English poet and critic, considered "To a Waterfowl" one of the best short poems in the language.[1] Such stanzas as these have a fine movement and diction:

> Vainly the fowler's eye
> Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
> As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
> Thy figure floats along.
>
> There is a Power whose care
> Teaches thy way along that pathless coast,—
> The desert and illimitable air,—
> Lone wandering, but not lost.
>
> He who, from zone to zone,
> Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
> In the long way that I must tread alone,
> Will lead my steps aright.

Other earlier poems are "The Yellow Violet," "Green River" (a favorite with the poet), "Monument Mountain" (connected with an Indian legend of western Massachusetts), "A Forest Hymn," "To the Fringed Gentian," and "The Death of the Flowers." "A Forest Hymn" reflects the solemn beauty of the woods in a sort of stately chant: the lines appealed to Poe, who thought it "scarcely possible to speak too highly

[1] See Bigelow's *Life of Bryant*, pp. 42-43, footnote, for views of Matthew Arnold and Hartley Coleridge.

of their great rhythmical beauty." The little poem, "To the Fringed Gentian," celebrates a distinctively American flower, and is as fresh as Burns's and Wordsworth's lines on English flowers. Bryant drew his images from what he saw around him, as all true nature poets do. For the sea and the mountains he apparently cared little; he loved the forests through which he wandered in his boyhood, and he loved the smaller flowers in the meadows near at hand. Many of his poems are on autumn and winter scenes, and evening seems to have made a stronger appeal to his meditative spirit than morning.

In the poems of his maturer and later years the same strains prevail, and it cannot be said that there is greater variety or any decided growth in poetic art. His patriotic verses are respectable, but lack the passion which marks the movement of the highest examples of that species of poetry. "The Little People of the Snow" is a pleasing treatment of a delicately supernatural theme—children and fairies—in dialogue form, but it has no real dramatic quality. Indeed, the last important production of the aged poet, "The Flood of Years," while it shows no loss of power, is neither in manner nor in matter superior to the earlier reflective poems. There is one poem of Bryant's middle years which has a different note from his other lyric utterances, and that is the sprightly "Robert of Lincoln," or "Bob-o'-link." Read aloud in a sympathetic voice, this is one of the most musical and spontaneous lyrics in American literature. Take these stanzas, for instance:

Robert of Lincoln is gayly dressed,
  Wearing a bright black wedding coat;
White are his shoulders and white his crest,
  Hear him call in his merry note:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
Look what a nice new coat is mine,
Sure there was never a bird so fine.
      Chee, chee, chee.

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
  Pretty and quiet, with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life,
  Broods in the grass while her husband sings:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
Brood, kind creature; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers while I am here.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Six white eggs on a bed of hay,
  Flecked with purple, a pretty sight!
There as the mother sits all day,
  Robert is singing with all his might:
    Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
    Spink, spank, spink;
Nice good wife, that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about.
    Chee, chee, chee.

Bryant's *Translation of Homer* was begun in earnest in 1866, partly as a distraction from his sorrow at the death of Mrs. Bryant that same year, though even before that he had put many passages of the Greek poet into English verse. The translation of the *Iliad* went on steadily, so many lines a day as a set task, for four years; then the old poet set to work on the *Odyssey*. By 1871 both poems were issued in smooth and dignified blank verse, as faithful to the spirit of the original as a reflective poet like Bryant could be to a rapid poet of action like Homer. It is a creditable translation, certainly for a man over seventy, more than fifty years distant from his college study of Greek; indeed, it would be hard to point out a better rendering of the old epic poet into English verse. The popularity of this version continues, though more spirited translations have since been made in prose.

Literary Characteristics.—Bryant's range is narrow, but in that range he is a master. He is our first genuine nature poet. He interprets to the spirit of man the calming, con-

soling effect of communion with nature. His view of nature is distinctly ethical, true Puritan that he was; he does not, like Wordsworth, with whom he has often been compared, find a mystic meaning in nature. The outward aspects of nature suggesting change and death appeal to Bryant more than the inner joyousness of the springing flowers and budding trees of springtime. Hence he prefers the melancholy of autumn and the coldness of winter. The thought of death is a favorite one with him.[1] His poetry is in truth without warmth: it is majestic and solemn, and there is something of monotony about it; but it always has moral elevation. Long narrative poems he could not write; of humor he had little; dramatic instinct he did not have.

A noticeable feature of Bryant's poetry is the "moral tag"; the clinching of the lesson of the poem in a closing stanza makes it a miniature sermon. Recall, for example, the final lines of "Thanatopsis," "To a Waterfowl," "Autumn Woods," "A Forest Hymn," and even of so lyric an utterance as "The Fringed Gentian":

> I would that thus, when I shall see
> The hour of death draw near to me,
> Hope blossoming within my heart,
> May look to heaven as I depart.

This ethical application at the end of a poem proved particularly satisfying to many serious-minded readers, who thought that every poem should teach something; to others it seemed a blemish, an almost impertinent emphasis of the obvious. There can be no doubt that this didactic fashion won for the poet a wide circle of readers and helped to establish his fame, whatever a more sensitive modern taste may feel about "moral tags."

This moral earnestness has made Bryant a quotable poet. Many lines have become current coin:

[1] Even in his poem on "June" each stanza makes some reference to death or the grave.

The groves were God's first temples.
—*From* "A Forest Hymn."

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,
Th' eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers.
—*From* "The Battlefield."

The melancholy days are come, the saddest of the year;
Of wailing winds and naked woods and meadows
brown and sere.
—*From* "Death of the Flowers."

Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.
—*From* "Thanatopsis."

The blank verse of Bryant is not only the greatest in American literature, but for serene dignity and noble cadence it has rarely been equalled since Milton. It is a fitting garment for the gravity and simplicity of the poet's favorite ideas; the lines read aloud affect one like slow organ music. The diction shows the influence of that early hearing and reading of the Bible, which was an invaluable part of Puritan training.

The picturesque region in which he was brought up furnished the background of Bryant's poems, as the English Lake country gave Wordsworth his material. As Irving was the first American writer to interpret to the world the Hudson River region and Cooper the first to make famous the scenery about Otsego Lake, Bryant was the earliest poet to invest with literary charm his native bit of New England soil. His long residence in New York entitles him to be placed in the "Knickerbocker Group" of writers, but his inspiration as a poet came from the land of the Puritans.

MINOR WRITERS

Besides the three leading authors of the Knickerbocker Group already considered, there were a few minor writers

whose work is more or less imitative of English models or somewhat fragmentary, and who therefore made no very significant contribution to American literature. It will be worth while to notice briefly at least three of these—Drake, Halleck, and Willis,—and to give the rest a passing mention.

Joseph Rodman Drake (1795-1820).—Drake was born in New York, began writing verses when a mere child, lost his parents early in life and had to go in business, studied medicine and practised it in connection with his duties as a druggist, and died of consumption at the age of twenty-five. Such, in a sentence, was the brief outward career of this gifted minor poet, whose life was almost exactly contemporaneous with that of John Keats and whose pathetic struggles with disease suggest those of the young Englishman. Drake was the intimate friend of Fitz-Greene Halleck; the two men—often called "the Damon and Pythias of American verse"—were literary partners and worked together in several productions, notably in the "Croaker Papers," a series of light, satirical verses published in the New York *Evening Post.*

Drake has lived in literature, however, as the author of two poems—"The Culprit Fay," a delicate narrative and descriptive poem on the penance done by a fairy for loving a mortal; and "The American Flag," one of the best of our patriotic lyrics. "The Culprit Fay" was suggested by a conversation between Drake, Halleck, and Cooper, in which it was asserted that American streams could furnish no such themes for poetry as the streams and hills of Scotland. To disprove this, Drake set to work and in three days, it is said, finished "The Culprit Fay," the scene of which is in the highlands overlooking the Hudson. The poem contains some musical verse and many ingenious fancies; and while the fairies are a little out of place in that region, such native birds and insects as the whippoorwill, the owl, the katydid, and the cricket, give to certain passages a pleasing local color. The following lines will serve to illustrate the movement and the daintiness of the descriptions:

Soft and pale is the moony beam,
Moveless still the glassy stream;
The wave is clear, the beach is bright
With snowy shells and sparkling stones;
The shore-surge comes in ripples light,
In murmurings faint and distant moans;
And ever afar in the silence deep
Is heard the splash of the sturgeon's leap,
And the bend of his graceful bow is seen—
A glittering arch of silver sheen,
Spanning the wave of burnished blue,
And dripping with gems of the river-dew.

Fitz-Greene Halleck (1790-1867).—Halleck was born at Guilford, Connecticut, and after a little school-teaching and clerking at home, came to New York in 1811 to accept a clerkship in a banking-house. Later he was employed in the office of John Jacob Astor, from which he retired in 1849 on a small annuity. The rest of his life was spent at his old home in Connecticut. Here in 1870, the eightieth anniversary of his birth, a monument was raised over his grave by his townspeople, the first honor of the kind paid to the memory of an American poet.

Soon after Halleck came to New York he met Drake, and the two soon became bosom friends; Drake, it seems, had been attracted to his fellow poet by the latter's remark that it "would be heaven to lounge upon the rainbow and read Tom Campbell." This will indicate the favorite reading of the young poets; Campbell and Byron they greatly liked. Halleck and Drake wrote verses for the New York papers in the light satiric vein popular in that day. Halleck's long poems are *Alnwick Castle* and *Fanny*, the last in the manner of Byron's *Beppo* or *Don Juan*; but the two poems on which his fame rests are "Marco Bozzaris," long a favorite piece for declamation, and the lines "On the Death of Joseph Rodman Drake." "Marco Bozzaris" celebrates the heroic death of the Greek leader in the romantic struggle for independence

against the Turks, in which Byron took a noble part. The closing lines have become a familiar quotation:

> For thou art Freedom's now and Fame's,
> One of the few, the immortal names,
> That were not born to die.

Halleck's tribute to his friend Drake, whose early death left his brother writer lonely, is one of the best known in literature; one stanza in particular is deservedly famous for its simple, heartfelt feeling:

> Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days!
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> Nor named thee but to praise.

Halleck was over-praised in his own lifetime, and Drake under-praised; this was due in part to the current partiality for stirring rapid verse of the Byronic order, such as we find in "Marco Bozzaris," which was inspired by events fresh in the minds of readers. While Halleck's verse has genuine human quality, that of Drake at his best has a finer, more delicate texture, and greater melody.

Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806-1867).—Of the minor New York writers the one who enjoyed the greatest popularity in his day was N. P. Willis. He was born in Portland, Maine, educated at Yale, and began his career on a magazine in Boston, where his father had founded a religious newspaper and, in 1827, the *Youth's Companion*. Growing dissatisfied with his Puritan surroundings, young Willis went to New York and became one of the editors of the *New York Mirror*. This was the periodical with which for a time Edgar Allan Poe was connected and in which "The Raven" was first published. With this magazine and the *Home Journal* of the same city Willis held editorial positions, along with George P. Morris, until his death. He spent five or six years in Europe, where

he was a great social favorite, returning in 1836 with an English wife; he purchased an estate near Oswego, New York, which he called Glenmary. Later, he bought Idlewild on the Hudson. From these two homes many of his sketches were contributed to the papers. While in Europe he had written a number of letters, sketches, and tales for New York periodicals.

The works of Willis consist mostly of several volumes of pleasing sketches, collected from the magazines, such as *Pencillings by the Way, Loiterings of Travel, Letters from Under a Bridge,* and *Out Doors at Idlewild;* and a number of poems on Biblical themes—"Hagar in the Wilderness," "Jepthah's Daughter," "Healing of the Daughter of Jairus,"—besides some sentimental and satirical verses. Much of Willis's work was done simply to catch the passing fancy, and has perished from the memory; his more finished productions are readable to-day, though they offend modern taste by their studied artificiality of style—their too great straining after cleverness of phrase and their overdone simplicity. His sacred poems, for instance, once so much admired, suffer by comparison with the strong, musical, and severely simple prose of the narratives in the King James version of the Bible, of which they are metrical paraphrases. If, in reading them, one is able to forget the harmony of the originals, the poetical versions are not unpleasing; but they seem rather superfluous to a generation which appreciates the Bible as literature.

Willis wrote in a day of "annuals," elegant little souvenirs of sentimental trivialities in verse and prose for the old-fashioned center-table. The early half of the nineteenth century had its "Tokens," "Keepsakes," "Friendship's Garlands," "Forget-me-nots," and other literary bouquets. For these dainty social booklets Willis wrote a great deal of graceful verse. By nature he was somewhat foppish, and the superficial brilliancy of much that he wrote reveals his weaknesses. It must not be forgotten, however, that he rendered a real

service to American letters in his praiseworthy efforts to give our early magazines a genuine literary flavor.

Other Writers of the Period.—To the New York group belong several writers of less importance than those just considered: JAMES KIRKE PAULDING (1778-1860), joint author with Irving of the humorous *Salmagundi* papers, and author of two or three clever satires in verse, several novels dealing with Dutch traditions on the Hudson and pioneer life, and a short life of Washington; his work is somewhat imitative of Irving's and Cooper's. RICHARD HENRY DANA (1787-1879), though born and educated in Boston, was editor of a New York magazine for a while, and his earlier poems were published in the *New York Review;* his best known poems are "The Buccaneer" and "The Little Beach Bird," showing the influence of Coleridge and Wordsworth; he was also an acute literary critic, one of the best, indeed, of our periodical essayists. His son, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., wrote the popular book, long an American classic, *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840). JOHN HOWARD PAYNE (1792-1852) was born in New York, spent some years in Boston, became playwright and actor, lived abroad, and died while United States Consul at Tunis; his remains were brought to Washington in 1883 and buried there. Payne wrote several plays, the best of which is the tragedy *Brutus;* his one immortal song, "Home, Sweet Home," is in the opera *Clari, the Maid of Milan* (1823). Other writers of well-known songs are SAMUEL WOODWORTH (1785-1842), author of "The Old Oaken Bucket" (1817); and GEORGE P. MORRIS (1802-1864), author of "Woodman, Spare that Tree"; both were New York editors.

Minor New England writers of this period were: JAMES GATES PERCIVAL (1795-1856), born in Connecticut and educated at Yale, a man of remarkable versatility and, in his day, of considerable reputation. He was physician, teacher, scientist, and a respectable poet; he helped Noah Webster on his dictionary. Percival's best poems are "The Coral Grove" and "To Seneca Lake." JOHN PIERPONT (1785-1866), born in Connecticut, educated at Yale, and for years a Unitarian minister in Boston, wrote "Warren's Address" and "The Pilgrim Fathers," fine patriotic poems. WASHINGTON ALLSTON (1779-1843), great American painter, literary critic, and writer of graceful verse, was born in South Carolina, but spent most of his life in Boston. MRS. LYDIA HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY (1791-1865) was a Connecticut school-teacher who wrote some fifty volumes of moral and domestic essays and verse, popular once but now relegated to the limbo of sentimental literature which made up the "annuals" and "gift-books" of our earlier national period. SAMUEL F. SMITH (1808-1895), who lived near Boston, will be remembered as the author of our national hymn, "My Country, 'tis of thee."

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE

LITERATURE	HISTORY
Washington Irving (1783-1859): Sketches, Stories, Biography, History	Florida Region purchased from Spain, 1819
First famous American writer; pioneer of modern short story; creator of "Knickerbocker Legend"	Monroe Doctrine, 1823
James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851): "Leatherstocking Tales" and Romances of the Sea	Erie Canal opened, 1825
Creator of the romance of the American forest, the American historical novel and sea tale	
William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878): Thanatopsis, To a Waterfowl, Forest Hymn, To a Fringed Gentian, etc.	First Railroad in United States, 1830
First notable American poet; interpreter of serious aspects of nature in noble blank verse	Morse Telegraph in operation (Baltimore and Washington) 1844
MINOR WRITERS	
Joseph Rodman Drake: The Culprit Fay	Mexican War, 1846-'47
Fitz-Greene Halleck: Marco Bozzaris	
Nathaniel P. Willis: Poems, Sketches	Discovery of Gold in California, 1848

Literary interest centers about the Hudson River and Otsego Lake regions; prose and poetry reflect more distinctively American subjects; sketches and romances of mountain, forest, and sea.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Burgess's The Middle Period, 1817-1858; Sparks's Expansion of the American People; Coman's Industrial History of the United States; Hitchcock's The Louisiana Purchase; Drake's Making of the Great West; Roosevelt's Winning of the West.

Literary.—Chapters in Richardson's, Wendell's, and Trent's American Literatures; Cairns's Development of American Literature, 1815-1833.

Irving.—Pierre M. Irving's Life and Letters of Washington Irving; Warner's Life of Irving (American Men of Letters); Payne's Leading American Essayists.—The works of Irving may be had in numerous inexpensive editions; *The Sketch Book*, *Life of Goldsmith*, and other works are to be found in good school editions.

Cooper.—Lounsbury's Life of Cooper (American Men of Letters); Clymer's James Fenimore Cooper (Beacon Biographies); Brownell's American Prose Masters; Erskine's Leading American Novelists. *The Last of the Mohicans* and other "Leather-stocking Tales" may be found in various series of school classics and in "Everyman's Library."

Bryant.—Godwin's Life of Bryant (standard authority); Bigelow's Life of Bryant (American Men of Letters); Bradley's Life of Bryant (English Men of Letters); Stedman's Poets of America; Burton's Literary Leaders of America; Alden's Studies in Bryant (American Book Co.) The standard edition of Bryant's Poems is published by D. Appleton & Co.; his translation of Homer by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Page's Chief American Poets (Houghton) contains the best of his poems.

Selections from all writers of the period may be found in Stedman and Hutchinson's Library of American Literature; selections from the poets in Stedman's American Anthology and Bronson's American Poems.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NEW ENGLAND WRITERS

Material Development.—The second quarter of the nineteenth century was a period of great material development in the United States and of marked social reforms in Europe. These reforms had little immediate influence in this country because we were too busy with the material and political upbuilding of our great American Commonwealth to do much else. Under the stimulus of inventions our growth was rapid and our prosperity great; commerce was quickened by the building of railroads, telegraph lines, cotton and woolen mills, and by the steady tide of immigration westward. The steamship meant frequent communication with Europe and the bringing into America of foreign races; victory in the Mexican War enlarged our southwestern frontier; the discovery of gold in California opened the Pacific slope to the eastern pioneer and furnished a new road to wealth. This material prosperity was accompanied, as often happens in history, by an intellectual awakening.

The New England Awakening.—Since the middle of the eighteenth century, as we have seen, New England had ceased to be prominent in literary activity. The leadership in letters had passed to Philadelphia and New York. The old Puritanism of the Mathers and Jonathan Edwards had lost its vitality, and the new forces were slow in germinating and coming to fruition; the dead hand of an outworn creed chilled the genius of several generations of New Englanders. Meanwhile, the Revolutionary War came on, and the thought and energy of the best men were turned to making a nation and not a literature; in both the North and the South the political essay and oration formed for a time the staple of the literary output.

Then arose the tribe of magazine writers and the few important figures of the Knickerbocker Group.

About 1840, however, it was evident that a new era had fully dawned in New England and that Massachusetts had regained her ascendency in literature. The awakening was both intellectual and spiritual—a protest against mental, religious, and physical bondage, and an almost impassioned assertion of freedom from the shackles of tradition. This remarkable movement, which has given to America her most distinguished group of writers, centered in Boston and the quiet village of Concord. At bottom it was an expression of a pervading spirit of liberalism, tending toward practical reform. In general it has come to be known as the "Transcendental Movement"; but there are three fairly well-defined phases, and it will make for clearness to treat them separately. Unitarianism is the religious phase, Transcendentalism proper the philosophic and literary, and Anti-Slavery, or Abolition, the political and social. All three entered into the making of New England literature.

Unitarianism.—Unitarianism was a reaction against the old Puritan orthodoxy; it was liberalism in religion. The stern Calvinistic creed of the earlier divines had, so the newer generation felt, made the spiritual and mental life of New England narrow and dark by its insistence on such doctrines as total depravity, eternal damnation, and predestination. It stressed the evil in human nature and doomed the majority of men to destruction; the new teaching emphasized the innate nobility of human nature and magnified the worth of the individual. Man was no longer to be regarded as a despised worm of the dust, the object of divine wrath, "crawling between earth and heaven" in apologetic humility, but rather as an aspiring son of heaven, free to think and to act. This view of course dignified the human conscience, while the traditional orthodoxy, according to Unitarian thinking, degraded it. The main contention of the liberals, therefore—aside from the purely

theological aspect of the question, which does not fall within the province of a history of literature—was for freedom of thought and conscience.

This religious controversy split the New England Congregationalists into two factions, the conservatives and the radicals, and colored the thought and the literature of that section for the next generation. The Unitarian impulse, let it be remembered, was simply a protest against what was regarded as mental and spiritual slavery, and a plea for the return into religion of the light of reason and intuition. Large numbers of the thinking and cultured people of New England gave their allegiance to the movement, and Harvard University became the intellectual center of Unitarian influence; while the conservative adherents of the old orthodoxy made Andover Theological Seminary their stronghold. Most of the Massachusetts writers, as we shall see, were sympathizers with the new movement and reflected its spirit directly or indirectly in their prose and poetry.

The leader of the progressives was WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1780-1842), the Unitarian minister of Boston. He was born at Newport, Rhode Island, educated at Harvard, and spent his life, except for two years of tutoring in Virginia, in and about Boston. Frail in body, serene in spirit, persuasive in utterance, Channing is the most attractive personality among the early Unitarians and a spiritual forerunner of Emerson. He appealed not so much by the force of his logic or by the graces of oratory as by the "sweetness and light" of his message and the moral earnestness of a serious and lofty soul. Had he given himself to literature rather than to the discussion of theological questions, vital interest in which has died out with the advancing years, American letters would doubtless have had another singularly gifted prose essayist. Even as it is, some of his sermons and controversial essays are still read for their charm of style and their high thought, a tribute which

is seldom paid to theologians; while his critical essays on Napoleon and Milton are real contributions to literature.

Channing's famous sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks in Baltimore in 1819 was a declaration of the new principles which he explained and defended for nearly forty years. He was not an aggressive leader—indeed, some of the radicals thought him timid—nor was he as intense as Jonathan Edwards, the apostle of the old order; but he carried conviction by his devout presence and the clear and strong current of his thoughts. A short selection from the sermon just mentioned will serve to show how different his views were from those of Edwards, and will at the same time illustrate the clear simplicity of his style at its best and prove his kinship to Emerson:

> We must start in religion from our own souls. In these is the fountain of all divine truth. An outward revelation is only possible and intelligible on the ground of conceptions and principles previously furnished by the soul. Here is our primitive teacher and light. Let us not disparage it. There are, indeed, philosophical schools of the present day, who tell us that we are to start in all our speculations from the Absolute, the Infinite. But we rise to these conceptions from the contemplation of our own nature. The only God whom our thoughts can rest on, and our hearts can cling to, and our consciences can recognize, is the God whose image dwells in our own souls. Many, indeed, think that they can learn God from marks of design and skill in the outward world; but our ideas of design and skill, of a determining cause, of an end or purpose, are derived from consciousness, from our own souls. Thus the soul is the spring of our knowledge of God.

In this twentieth century such statements would occasion little remark; a hundred years ago they not only gave rise to much discussion, but to many heartburnings as well. And yet the thoughtful reader will perceive that William Ellery Channing was a spiritual descendant of Jonathan Edwards on the mystic side.

Transcendentalism.—The greatest force back of the literary revival in New England in the second quarter of the nineteenth

century was the "transcendental movement" proper, closely related to the religious phase just considered, but more philosophic and less easily defined. "Transcendentalism" was a term applied to that rather vague form of philosophy which is concerned with those truths that "transcend," or go beyond, human experience, or the senses. In our everyday lives we deal with facts known to us through our five senses, and with ideas—just as real as these facts—beyond the reach of our senses. Beyond the realm of sense and thought proper there are unseen forces which control our lives often more truly than those we can see and understand. These transcendent truths are called intuitions, or innate ideas, which one cannot explain, but which one acts on in life as confidently as if they belonged to sense or reason. He who sees and believes in the things in the realm beyond experience, making them real to himself, is an idealist. Now, the transcendentalists were idealists, and their philosophy is only a form of idealism. That is as near accuracy as we can get. To be very accurate is not to be transcendental; an exact definition of transcendentalism is impossible. It is not a formal philosophy.

The idealistic philosophy known as transcendentalism had its origin in Germany with Kant, who maintained that beyond ordinary knowledge and experience there is a higher sphere of intuitive ideas. This teaching goes back to the Greek philosopher Plato, father of all idealists. From Germany transcendentalism passed to England through the essays of Carlyle and Coleridge, both enthusiastic students of German thought; and from England it reached this country largely through Emerson and other disciples of the English interpreters of the Germans. Transcendentalism was the opposite of materialism in all its phases. It utterly repudiated the teaching of John Locke, the seventeenth century English philosopher, that knowledge comes only through the senses and is therefore limited by experience. The transcendentalists asserted, on the contrary, that there is an "inner light" to every individual soul.

The movement began in Concord, Massachusetts, about 1836, when a number of young enthusiasts met informally from time to time to read and discuss German philosophy. This group came to be known as the "Transcendental Club." Among the members were Emerson, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Ripley, Alcott, James Freeman Clarke, and Theodore Parker—all sincerely devoted to the new gospel of plain living and high thinking, which made the "Concord School" the most celebrated group of idealists in America.

To the practical mind of that day the transcendentalists seemed a set of visionaries, with their heads in the clouds and their thoughts up among the moonbeams. Their talk was more or less incomprehensible, their theories "transcendental moonshine," and their radiant air-castles "pinnacled dim in the intense inane." Of their ideal communities Lowell remarked that "everything was to be common but common sense." Dickens, on his first visit to America in 1842, was told when in Boston that "whatever was unintelligible would certainly be transcendental."[1] Among these New England idealists there were, indeed, some apostles of the "new views" who made themselves ridiculous by their eccentric dress and manners, and by their "Orphic utterances," which even the initiated could scarcely understand. Numerous "isms" sprang up, special "revelations" were reported, fantastic schemes of social reform were advocated, and the return to nature and the simple life was enthusiastically urged upon the faithful.

But in spite of their vagaries of one kind and another, the transcendentalists as a whole had many virtues, and the idealism which they preached and practised was a tonic force in American life. "There was a keener scrutiny of institutions and domestic life than any we had known," says Emerson, the central figure and the sanest exponent of transcendentalism; "there was sincere protesting against existing evils, and there

[1]See Dickens's *American Notes*.

were changes of employment dictated by conscience. No doubt there was plentiful vaporing, and excess of backsliding might occur. But in each of these movements emerged a good result, a tendency to the adoption of simpler methods and an assertion of the sufficiency of the private man."[1] Two direct, tangible results of the "transcendental movement" were *The Dial* and Brook Farm, which merit brief notice.

The Dial (1840-1844).—The transcendentalists felt the need of a periodical in which to express their views, and accordingly in July, 1840, the first issue of *The Dial* appeared. It was a quarterly, published in Boston, with Margaret Fuller as the first editor and Ralph Waldo Emerson as the second and last. The contributors were the members of the "Transcendental Club," the most important, besides the two editors, being Thoreau, Ripley, Theodore Parker, and Bronson Alcott. Alcott furnished for its pages his "Orphic sayings," which, if clear to himself, were generally unintelligible to others. For two years Margaret Fuller bravely edited *The Dial* in the face of many discouragements; then Emerson carried on the work for two years, when for lack of financial support it was discontinued. The earlier numbers are better than the later; the articles tended to become painfully long and diffuse, and the philosophy hopelessly vague. "You begin to feel," says Professor Barrett Wendell, "as if each writer would have liked to write the whole thing himself. *The Dial* begins with an auroral glow, which soon fades into a rather bewildering mist."[2]

The Dial deserves to be remembered, however, as the first periodical in America with a purely ideal purpose; it helped the tone of American literature and it gave an impetus as well as a new direction to creative energy. To this magazine Emerson contributed several of his best poems and early essays, while Thoreau really began his career as a writer for its columns. A

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[1] "The New England Reformers."

[2] Wendell's *A Literary History of America*, p. 303.

few words should be said about the remarkable woman who was its first editor.

The most gifted woman writer among the transcendentalists was MARGARET FULLER (1810-1850). She was born in Cambridge, carefully educated, began early to write, eagerly embraced the new doctrines of the circle at Concord, was the center of an intellectual coterie invited to her house for conversations on literary and philosophical themes, and an essayist and letter-writer of note. The Platonic friendship between herself and Emerson during her residence in Concord is one of the few beautiful associations of the kind in literature. After the failure of *The Dial* Miss Fuller became literary critic of the *New York Tribune* on Horace Greeley's invitation; two or three years later she went to Italy, where in 1847 she married the Marquis Ossoli, an Italian patriot. Italy was at this time in the throes of her long struggle for liberty, and in this Margaret Fuller and her husband were deeply interested. The Ossolis, with their child, left Italy for America, virtually exiles; when the ship was almost in sight of New York, a violent storm arose, and all three perished. Of Margaret Fuller's writings, which fill four volumes, the *Papers on Literature and Art* (1846) may be mentioned as perhaps the best.

Brook Farm (1841-1847).—The Brook Farm Community was an attempt to put into practice some of the views of the transcendentalists as set forth in *The Dial.* The leader of the enterprise was George Ripley, the Unitarian clergyman of Boston, who, with other ardent social reformers, purchased about two hundred acres of land at West Roxbury, nine miles from Boston, for the purpose of establishing an ideal community. Besides Ripley, the principal members were Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles A. Dana, afterwards editor of the New York *Sun*, and George William Curtis, well known later as critic and magazine editor. Hawthorne withdrew at the end of a year; Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Horace Greeley were interested visitors, though not members. The active mem-

bership included about one hundred and fifty persons; visitors, drawn thither through curiosity or genuine interest, were both numerous and annoying. In 1846 fire destroyed one of the main buildings, and after another year of struggle the Brook Farm settlement dissolved.

The purpose of the experiment was to promote a spirit of co-operation, to emphasize the dignity of labor, and to make mutually helpful and attractive the simple life. Each member was to do a certain amount of daily work; a school was to be established and literature and science studied along with agricultural pursuits. Like all more or less Utopian communities, Brook Farm failed; it proved, however, an interesting object-lesson in idealism, and it furnished pleasing material for several writers. Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* reflects the higher life of the community, while his *American Note Books* give entertaining glimpses of his own and his fellow Brook-farmers' experiences as agricultural amateurs and social reformers.

Abolitionism.—The third phase of the New England awakening was the Abolition movement, or anti-slavery agitation, which is reflected in the works of most of the New England writers. As an influence in literature this movement was of course an outcome of the general passion for democracy which, in the first half of the nineteenth century, affected the English-speaking world. Social reform of one kind or another is the theme of numerous English novels and of much poetry. Before the middle of the century slaves had been set free in all the British possessions. Slavery continued in the Southern States because it was profitable and because it was regarded as an indispensable part of the social system. In the North it had long ceased to be industrially desirable; in the South it was a matter of vested rights, and so recognized by the great majority of the people of the North. There had always existed in the South some opposition to the institution of slavery on moral grounds, and here and there a master had freed his slaves; the system, however, had become traditional

and apparently necessary, and was held to be within local and personal rights. It formed a part of the feudal social order which lingered longest in the conservative South where plantation life prevailed.

By 1840 a rather aggressive opposition to slavery had developed in New England, and this rapidly grew into radical proportions and assumed a militant character. Such agitators as William Lloyd Garrison, who violently attacked slavery in his paper *The Liberator*, and Wendell Phillips, the leading orator of the anti-slavery movement, gradually aroused the New England conscience to the point of action. This radical attitude was for a long time bitterly condemned in the North among the higher classes, and the abolitionists suffered social ostracism and in some cases actual violence. The practical difficulties of abolishing the institution werefreely recognized by thoughtful New Englanders: the confiscation of property, though it consisted of human beings, appeared indefensible; the interference with the internal affairs of other states was held to be unjustifiable. Various compromises were suggested by statesmen like Clay and Webster, and in this way the inevitable conflict was delayed for years. Patience on both sides was finally exhausted. Secession, never an agreeable alternative to all the Southern states,[1] became at last a fact and the country during the years from 1861 to 1865 was convulsed with war.

With the North the slavery agitation was mainly a moral question, growing out of that hereditary ardor for reform which characterized the Puritan conscience and which had its revival in the idealism of the movements just considered; with the South the matter of slavery was a question of property and traditional social rights, and as such was generally defended. The institution, however, being a survival of outgrown world-conditions and to that extent a social and political anachronism, was doomed. Being a moral question, abolition naturally

[1] See Munford's *Virginia's Attitude on Secession.*

entered into the making of New England literature, though not so extensively as might be supposed. With the exception of Whittier, the foremost New England writers were not radical abolitionists, as we shall soon see; most of them wrote against slavery, but were not sufficiently partisan to become agitators, feeling that they had other messages to deliver to their own and succeeding generations.

Of all the books and pamphlets connected with the abolition movement one deserves mention because of its contemporary influence and the literary quality which has kept it alive as a minor contribution to American letters—Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* HARRIET BEECHER STOWE (1811-1896), born in Lichfield, Connecticut, was daughter of Reverend Lyman Beecher and sister of Henry Ward Beecher; she was carefully educated by her father, a Congregationalist minister, and married Reverend Calvin Stowe, professor in Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, of which her father was for a number of years president. Later, Dr. Stowe was a professor in Bowdoin College, Maine, and in Andover Theological Seminary. During her residence in Cincinnati, Mrs. Stowe visited friends in Kentucky; out of observations there, but more from her reading and conversations, she gained material for her one famous book.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was written in Brunswick, Maine, in 1851-'52, and published serially in the *National Era,* an anti-slavery periodical of Washington. When put into book form, it had a wide sale in the North and in Europe; a half million copies are said to have been sold in five years; it was dramatized, and is still sometimes seen on the stage. The work provoked much adverse criticism in the South, where it was asserted that the pictures of conditions in the slave states were distorted, and that the writer made a general application of exceptional abuses. Whatever one may think of the art of the book, which has crudities of style and sensational spots of melodrama, or of the truth of the portrayal of negro life in

slave days, the story has a certain amount of human interest, wholly aside from its purposeful intention. The early success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is largely explained, of course, by its appeal to an agitated public mind; it was written at the psychological moment in a great national crisis as an expression of the sentiment of an individual who voiced at the same time that of the abolitionists. To the reader of to-day, however, Mrs. Stowe's *Old-Town Folks*, dealing with a subject much more familiar to her—New England village life—seems to have more literary merit.

After this preliminary discussion of the literary awakening in New England and its causes, we may now proceed to consider the principal writers. For the sake of clearness and convenience they may be divided into the following groups: (1) The Concord Group, (2) The Cambridge Group, (3) The Historians and the Orators. The poet Whittier belongs to no one of these groups. As Concord and Cambridge were the most conspicuous centers of literary activity, it seems best to treat first of the essayists and poets who did most of their work at one or the other of these places.

THE CONCORD GROUP

The village of Concord, twenty miles from Boston, is famous as the home of the transcendentalists. Here lived for most of his life Ralph Waldo Emerson, essayist, poet, and philosopher; here Henry D. Thoreau, essayist and nature lover, spent his life; and here for a number of years Nathaniel Hawthorne, romancer, made his home.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

His Life.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, descendant of a line of clergymen and scholars, was born in Boston, May 25, 1803, son of William Emerson, minister of the First Unitarian Church of that city. The Emersons were of good old Puritan stock, people of culture and refinement, who

in the religious changes in New England had accepted the more liberal form of faith. The mother of Ralph Waldo Emerson was a woman of serene and beautiful character, and from her he must have inherited some of his most distinctive traits; it was she, indeed, who brought him up, for his father died when the boy was only eight years old, leaving five children, the care of whom devolved upon the strong, sacrificing woman. Emerson went to the Boston Latin School, then to Harvard, graduating in 1821. He was a good, though not a brilliant student; mathematics he did not like; rhetoric and oratory appealed to him, and he was a wide reader. He seems to have impressed his schoolmates as an exceptional boy—"angelic and remarkable," one of them said of him. This does not mean that he was a prig, but that there was about the boy a certain spiritual quality which in a sense detached him from his fellows and at the same time won their love.

For four years following his graduation Emerson taught school. Over his pupils the young pedagogue, not yet twenty when he began teaching, appears to have had complete command, controlling them without effort simply by the calmness and restraint of an engaging personality. He did not punish except with words, which were quite sufficient either to restrain or to stimulate. One of his pupils remembers "a peculiar look in his eyes, as if he saw something beyond what seemed to be in the field of vision." From school-teaching Emerson, as was perfectly natural for a descendant of ministers, turned to the study of theology at the Harvard Divinity School, where he remained for three years. A trip to the South for his health, during which he preached in Charleston and elsewhere, was followed by further preaching experience in Northampton, Concord, and Boston. In 1829 he became associate minister of the Second Unitarian Church of Boston, the "Old North Church," of which Reverend Henry Ware was the head. This same year he married Miss Ellen Tucker a woman of rare beauty and charm; three years later Mrs. Emerson died of consumption. By 1832 Emerson had certain conscientious scruples against administering the Lord's Supper; in a sermon that year he frankly stated his views, which were contrary to those of the church, and resigned. He parted from the congregation in friendliness and good will. He had now to find a new work.

In 1833 Emerson visited Europe, making a tour of Sicily, Italy, parts of France and of Great Britain. He was less impressed by the scenery and the places of historic interest than by the men of letters whom he met—Landor, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. With the last he formed a friendship which lasted through life. Carlyle was then living in his lonely retreat, Craigenputtoch, in the Scottish moors, and the young American's visit was a cheering experience to him and

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

his gifted wife. Between the two men, alike in their spiritual enthusiasms though unlike in temperament, a correspondence began, after Emerson's return, which was stimulating to both. Indeed, it was through his Concord friend that the earlier works of the Scotchman were first published and extensively read in America.

Emerson now settled down at Concord and gave himself to lecturing and writing. It was the day of the "lyceum lecture course" in nearly every town and village, the predecessor of the present-day "university extension course." Beginning with lectures on natural history and his travels, he soon chose more abstract themes of ethical and literary value, and on these he prepared discourses or wrote essays. For the next thirty or forty years he supported himself in part, at least, by lecturing; some of his trips extended into the South and the West. His serene presence and the lofty idealism of his utterances, despite his somewhat awkward manner, held his audiences, who overlooked his absent-mindedness, his losing of his place in the manuscript, and his hesitations, because they saw in him the embodiment of moral earnestness and in his language a rare poetic beauty. At home in Concord he was a kind and considerate neighbor in the square, old-fashioned white house, whither he brought his second wife in 1835.

Here he lived until his death. Another trip to Europe was made in 1847-'48, during which he lectured in England. In 1871 he went as far west as California, a considerable undertaking in that day. The last journey abroad followed the burning of his house in 1872, partly for relief from the shock and for the benefit of his health in general. On his return the next year his neighbors met him at the station with carriages, music, and flowers, and in a triumphal procession escorted him to the house which they had restored for him in his absence. In all these years various worldly honors had come to the philosopher: Harvard conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws in 1866; he spoke before many societies and colleges; in 1874 he was nominated for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University against the Earl of Beaconsfield, and received five hundred votes to the Englishman's seven hundred, a remarkable honor for an American. One of his last addresses was that before the literary societies of the University of Virginia in 1876.

Even before the burning of his home in 1872, Emerson's friends had noticed a weakening of his physical powers, which showed itself most perceptibly in lapses of memory. He forgot faces and names, and for ten years before his death he was fully himself only at times. At Longfellow's funeral, not a great while before his own, he looked intently at the face of the dead poet and said to a friend near him: "That gentle-

man was a sweet, beautiful soul, but I have entirely forgotten his name." The twilight deepened until the end came peacefully on April 27, 1882. He was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at Concord; a huge granite boulder marks the tomb, and on its rough-hewn face, following Emerson's name, is the inscription, taken from his own poem, "The Problem":

> The passive Master lent his hand
> To the vast soul that o'er him planned.

His Personality.—Emerson was tall and slender, with the face and manner of a scholar. His features, as one may see in his pictures, were refined and his expression sedate, calm, and kindly. In his countenance there was a rare serenity. "There was majesty about him," says Lowell, "beyond all other men I have known, and he habitually dwelt in that ampler and diviner air to which most of us, if ever, only rise in spurts." Simplicity characterized his habits of life. He had little of the traditional Yankee ingenuity: he said he could split a shingle four ways with one nail; his little son, seeing him handle a spade rather awkwardly, called out, "Take care, papa,—you will dig your leg." He is said to have had remarkable patience and a good temper; he endured with equanimity the visits of the curious. There is general agreement as to his gracious manner and his sincerity; children loved him and Concord farmers liked to talk with him, though they did not comprehend all he said.

EMERSON'S GRAVE
Concord, Mass.

There was, withal, an indefinable charm about Emerson's personality. His smile has been called angelic. And yet he was not without a touch of native shrewdness that saved him from wild schemes of reform; he had too much common sense to follow the fantastic notions of some of his fellow transcendentalists. His reserve kept him a little aloof, so that he had not many intimate friends. The admiration he excited among those who agreed with him as well as among those who did not, is an evidence of the fascination of an unworldly nature, in which there was a suggestion of the seer and the mystic. "It was good," says Hawthorne, "to meet him in the wood-paths or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one."

His Essays.—Emerson's prose works consist for the most part of essays and addresses. Even when a volume is made up of chapters and the whole called *Nature*, or *English Traits*, or *The Conduct of Life*, or *Society and Solitude*, each chaper is simply an essay on some phase of the general subject considered more or less abstractly. The earliest volume is entitled *Nature*, and appeared in 1836; the headings of some of the chapters are "Beauty," "Discipline," "Idealism," "Spirit." The same method is pursued in later works, such as *The Conduct of Life* (1860) and *Society and Solitude* (1870). The most concrete prose work is that called *English Traits* (1856), a series of chapters on the characteristics of the English people as observed by Emerson on his lecture tour in England and Scotland in 1847-'48. *Representative Men* (1850) is a group of estimates of the characters, teachings, and influence of great personages—Plato, Swedenborg, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Goethe; this volume, originally lectures in Great Britain, suggests Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. It is evident, therefore, that the essay-form was Emerson's favorite method, whether he named his effort an "essay" or a "lecture." Indeed, his essays were mostly adaptations of his lectures.

The first notable utterance of Emerson was his Phi Beta Kappa address on "The American Scholar," delivered at Harvard in 1837. In this famous speech he pleads for a more generous and a more original culture in America. The time has come, he says, to speak and think for ourselves; what is needed in literature and in thought is the boldness to break with tradition and freely to act on our own intuitions. He exhorted young men to do their own thinking; he assured them that imitation is suicide; he summoned them as with a trumpet call to a newer freedom:

> We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. . . . A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men.

This remarkable address was epoch-making; Holmes calls it "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." Lowell has told us of the scene as one "always to be treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent." To the younger part of the audience "The American Scholar" was an inspiring message; among the conservative it aroused dissent, which was emphasized by the "Divinity School Address" the next year. One thing was clear, however—a new oracle had appeared.

Far more startling to his hearers and readers was the "Divinity School Address," delivered in the summer of 1838 before the senior class of the Harvard Divinity School. In this Emerson makes a strong plea for the right of the individual soul as an interpreter of religion, without reliance on historical creeds or other outward forms. The conservative Unitarians were shocked at what seemed the destructive tendencies of the address, and a somewhat violent controversy followed, in which, however, Emerson himself took no part. The opening

sentences of the "Divinity School Address" form a prose poem on nature, refreshing as the breath of summer:

> In this refulgent summer it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds, and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm of Gilead, and the new hay. Night brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays. Man under them seems a young child, and his huge globe a toy. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes for the crimson dawn.

For the general reading public the two volumes entitled *Essays*, published respectively in 1841 and 1844, have meant more than all the rest of Emerson's prose works. The first series includes essays on "History," "Self-Reliance," "Compensation," "Spiritual Laws," "Friendship," "The Over-Soul," "Circles"; the second series contains essays on "The Poet," "Experience," "Character," "Manners," "Gifts." Those in the first volume have probably become more familiar to readers than the others. The themes, it will be observed, are all abstract, and some of them carry a mystic suggestion. There is little or no logical sequence in the development of the subject. The sentence and not the paragraph is virtually the unit of the structure, and each sentence is "rammed with thought." The power of condensation is carried to the limit; consequently many of the statements resemble inspired, oracular utterances, with an air of finality; they are axiomatic spiritual deliverances. There is no argument,—no proposition is laid down and developed; all moves on in a high atmosphere; spirit calls to spirit. These essays resemble Bacon's in their compression of language and their aphoristic manner, but they scorn the appeal to mere worldly wisdom which runs through those of the great Elizabethan; they are endlessly stimulating in their clear idealism.

The will is energized, the imagination fired, the mental curiosity aroused by sentences like these:

Insist on yourself; never imitate.

Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string.

Every man's task is his life-preserver.

Hitch your wagon to a star.

Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue.

Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.

What your heart thinks great, is great.

Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

Greatness always appeals to the future.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.

You begin reading one of Emerson's essays, pencil in hand; you come upon a striking thought, and you mark it; then upon another, and you mark that; you soon find that you are marking so many sentences that the unmarked ones are becoming more conspicuous; you give up in despair. You say to yourself as you read: "That's my own thought, which I have never been able to express; I recognize my intuition here." Thus this idealist has found you out. You may not understand all that he says; no matter; the challenge is there, and you follow on fascinated by the mystery. And so Emerson was able to take an unpromising abstract theme, on which none but genius could speak with originality, and make it fresh and vital. To many an imaginative and high-souled youth the first reading of these essays, with their incisive and authoritative tone, has

proved epoch-making. Once assimilated, they exert a tonic effect upon the whole mental life; they bring enlargement of vision and spiritual enrichment.

His Poetry.—Emerson did not publish a collection of his poems until 1846, when he was forty three, though many of them had been written long before that; several—"The Problem," "Woodnotes," "The Sphinx," and two or three others—were published in *The Dial*, of which he was for a while the editor. Another volume of poems appeared in 1867.

EMERSON'S HOME
Concord, Mass.

The comparative slowness in collecting his poems leads one to feel that Emerson was primarily concerned with prose as a mode of expression; in other words, that he could best deliver his message in the essay-form. As the essays were often built out of the lectures, they appear far more purposeful than the poems; some of them seem provincial, indeed, as if adapted to suit the conditions of New England thought. The poems,

however, have a more highly sustained quality, more of the universal, and strike one as more spontaneous.

Opinions vary as to the excellence of Emerson's verse. He said of his poetic gift: "I am born a poet, of a low class, without doubt, yet a poet. That is my nature and my vocation." Matthew Arnold declines to regard him as a great poet, while Stedman speaks of him as "our most typical and inspiring poet." Emerson is undoubtedly right when he says that by nature he is a poet; much of his prose is poetry in all save form. His prose is often undressed poetry: in the happy figure of Oliver Wendell Holmes, it is the difference between "Cinderella at the fireside and Cinderella at the prince's ball."[1] Take, for instance, these prose sentences from the "Works and Days":

> The days are ever divine as to the first Aryans. They come and go like muffled and veiled figures, sent from a distant friendly party; but they say nothing, and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away.

Compare with this the famous poem called "Days," in which, as Dr. Holmes says, we have the same thought "in full dress":

> Daughters of Time, the hypocritic Days,
> Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
> And marching single in an endless file,
> Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
> To each they offer gifts after his will,
> Bread, kingdom, stars, and sky that holds them all.
> I, in my pleachéd garden, watched the pomp,
> Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
> Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
> Turned and departed silent. I, too late,
> Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

We accordingly find in Emerson's poetry the same mystic feeling for nature, the same transcendental interpretation of human life, that we find in the essays, but in a more delicate

[1] Holmes's *Life of Emerson*, p. 313.

and ornamental form. The nature poems are so elevated in thought and imagery that they are almost spiritual. Gleams of rare and radiant light, as from some far-off star, filter through the lines into the reader's mind, calming the passions and giving serenity of spirit. The atmosphere is a little chilly, but it is very clear. The following lines are some of the best from poems on nature:

O, tenderly the haughty day
Fills his blue urn with fire.
—*From* "Concord Ode."

Thou canst not wave thy staff in air,
Or dip thy paddle in the lake,
But it carves the bow of beauty there,
And the ripples in rhymes the oar forsake.
—*From* "Woodnotes."

Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being.
—*From* "The Rhodora."

The frolic architecture of the snow.
—*From* "The Snow-Storm."

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;
For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?
—*From* "Good-bye."

Other lines, more humanly inspiring, the best of them illumined with spiritual insight, are these well-known verses which have long been parts of our poetic heritage:

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.
—*From* "Concord Hymn."

One accent of the Holy Ghost
The heedless world hath never lost.
—*From* "The Problem."

What is excellent,
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again.
—*From* "Threnody."

Heartily know,
When half-gods go,
The gods arrive.
—*From* "Give All to Love."

Tell men what they knew before;
Paint the prospect from their door.
—*From* "Fragments."

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, *Thou must*,
The youth replies, *I can*.
—*From* "Voluntaries."

Whatever one may think of Emerson's poetry as a whole, the passages just quoted surely entitle him to be called a genuine poet. His limitations are evident: his verse is intellectual and cold; it is sometimes obscure because of its careless syntax or its remote allusiveness; occasionally the rhythm is faulty and the music broken; there is at times an apparent straining after paradox, and there is generally a lack of human warmth and simplicity. Still, when all has been said on the adverse side, the impressive fact remains that in Emerson's

slender volume of verse we have an originality, a clearness, a gleaming light, which reveal a delicate quality of poetic genius second in American literature only to that of Poe. Such poems as "The Problem," "Concord Hymn," "Woodnotes," "The Rhodora," "The Humble-Bee," "The Snow-Storm," "The Sphinx," and "Voluntaries," would rank high in any literature. The longest of the poems is "Threnody," an elegy on his little son who died at the age of five. The tone is one of restrained passion, growing philosophically calm, and ending in serene cheerfulness; it has something of the sadness of the poetry of Matthew Arnold, but without the Englishman's hopelessness; it ends in light and trust. The "Threnody" is the one fine elegy in our literature.

In his treatment of nature as well as in his ethical quality Emerson is akin to Bryant, but his serene, oracular manner, suggestive of an oriental high priest, is all his own. He is essentially a lyric poet and could not sustain himself in long flights.

Literary Characteristics.—Emerson's sentences are independent units, crisp and epigrammatic, reminding one of the "wisdom literature" of the Bible. He has what he called a "lapidary style"; the little "stones" are skillfully worked into a mosaic of thought. "I build my house of boulders," said Emerson. Each sentence is "an infinitely repellent particle." He had a delicate ear for a fine phrase, and a gift for hitting upon the inevitable word. He often wrought out his sentences separately, jotted them down in his notebook, and when he was ready to prepare a lecture or an essay, he put them together, with the result that there was unity of spirit rather than unity of thought. So he went on weaving his cloth of gold or building his palace of diamonds. The style is clear, except where the subject is more or less nebulous. It is eminently suggestive; we have a series of texts on each of which a philosophic sermon might be preached. The shining lucidity of Emerson's prose gives it distinction of literary form; its

artistic quality is ever apparent to the ear attuned to subtle cadences.

Emerson's Message.—Emerson had no system of philosophy. He was an idealist, something of a mystic, steadied with the ballast of shrewd common sense. His writings show an affinity with the poetic idealism of Plato and German transcendentalism, but he does not attempt to formulate his views. He speaks out in oracular fashion, disclosing new facets of old truth and appealing to the intuitions. He has much to say of the "over-soul," that all-pervading presence of the Deity in man and nature; to him "the world is saturated with deity." This sounds pantheistic; in the higher utterances there is, indeed, a touch of Oriental mysticism; but, in the last analysis, it is an idealistic philosophy for practical life. The call is to the individual to be free, self-reliant, optimistic, to stand for the larger truth. Emerson could not be a partisan; naturally, he was an abolitionist, but he took no active part in that great movement. Social reform did not interest him as deeply as individual redemption. He is the greatest individualist in our literature.

Emerson is above all things else a stimulator of thought and a tonic to the will. He is one of the noblest of teachers. Matthew Arnold calls him "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit." Against materialism in politics and in religion and in society he insistently protested. To the young in particular he brings a message of refreshing idealism: "Be yourself, trust your own deeper instincts, live in harmony with the higher law, think for yourself." Character is the central thing in education and in life. All this is set forth with telling power in the essay on "Self-Reliance," which every youth should carefully read.

The influence of Emerson on his own time was immense; it is hardly too much to say that his lectures, essays, and personality did more than anything else to transform New England thought and tinge it with the colors of romance. Out

of his teachings was born a new idealism. His contemporaries, Thoreau, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Lowell, owed much to him; indeed, the whole of American literature has felt the uplift of his serene and hopeful utterances. And to innumerable youths in the generations since his day the winged words of Emerson have come as an inspiriting message—an unimpassioned, but none the less compelling, exhortation to courageous thinking and greater nobility of life.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862)

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

His Life.—Henry D. Thoreau, essayist, poet, and naturalist, was born in Concord, Massachusetts, in 1817, the only one of the main figures of the Concord Group who was a native of that village. Thoreau's ancestry was, as the name indicates, remotely French. His father was a pencil-maker, only fairly well-to-do, and young Thoreau had partly to work his way through college and partly to depend upon scholarships, even as his friend Emerson had done. He graduated at Harvard in 1837, where he was a moderately good student. After leaving college, he taught school for a while and then turned to surveying and the making of pencils for a living. These occupations were not long continued, however, for Thoreau's tastes were simple and his wants few, and he found that with about six weeks of manual labor he could support himself for a year. He occasionally lectured, read much, and wrote of the life around him. Above all else, he wanted to be independent and to live close to nature.

Soon after his graduation Thoreau met Emerson, and the friendship then formed lasted through life; indeed, for two years the young disciple was an inmate of Emerson's home. In 1845 he built for himself a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond, a mile from Concord, and there spent

over two years alone, studying nature, cultivating his patch of ground, and writing on his books. Here he enjoyed his quiet hours of reading and the free and simple pleasures of the woods. He was not a hermit, however; he made almost daily trips to the village and welcomed such friends as came out to his retreat. "My purpose in going to Walden Pond," said he, "was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles." Before this he and his brother had built a boat and journeyed in it up and down the Concord and Merrimac Rivers on a tour of exploration. The rest of Thoreau's life, after he deserted his hut, was spent quietly in and about Concord, with occasional trips through New England; he knew his native region thoroughly and deeply loved it. Outwardly his career was uneventful. In 1862 Thoreau died, and was buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery; his grave is not far from Emerson's.

His Personality.—A somewhat eccentric, thoroughly original, independent sort of man, Thoreau was the most rugged and natural of the transcendentalists. He was a remarkably keen observer of nature, finding interest in the commonplace, seeing what other men usually pass over. For the secrets of nature he had almost microscopic eyes. He was able to turn his hand to anything: carpentering, whitewashing, gardening, surveying, were a few of his avocations. He read the Greek poets for pleasure, and there was probably no one in New England, except Greek professors, who knew them so well; certainly there was no one who was more lovingly familiar with them. He likewise knew the English classics, particularly the Elizabethan dramatists, and he had some acquaintance with Oriental literature. Intellectually Thoreau was a highly cultured man and an independent thinker.

He was absolutely simple and sincere; children were fond of him and he loved to romp with them; with more sophisticated folk, men of the world, he had not much to do, preferring the farmers of Concord. In his manners and appearance there was the air of a man who loved the out-of-doors, who lived in the open, welcoming the rains and the sunshine, the friend of animals and trees and flowers. He was not wholly a recluse;

retirement from towns and cities simply meant for him the free life; he was not a cynic, but a poet-naturalist.

Thoreau was, of course, a strong anti-slavery man on principle. Refusing to pay his poll tax because it was levied by a government which permitted slavery, he was sent to jail. Emerson came to see him and asked in astonishment: "Henry, why are you here?" Thoreau immediately replied: "Why are you *not* here?" More of a partisan than his seer friend, he welcomed an opportunity to suffer for convictions, however remote the connection between taxation in Massachusetts and slavery in the South might be.

The entire life of Thoreau is a consistent illustration of his own saying that "a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone." In practice he may have had a touch of the Bohemian, but in principle he was a true Puritan.

His Works and Literary Characteristics.—The works of Thoreau consist of his *Journal*, now published in fourteen volumes; a number of books compiled from the *Journal*, descriptive of New England nature; *The Maine Woods* (1864), *Cape Cod* (1865), and *A Yankee in Canada* (1866), all records of tramps through the regions mentioned; *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* (1849), and *Walden* (1854). Only the last two were published during Thoreau's life. The *Journal* is virtually an autobiography, covering the years from his graduation at Harvard to his death, and is a rich mine of information about the author's tastes, purposes, and ideals. Independent of the *Journal*, his works are in eleven volumes—essays, descriptions, narrations of personal experiences. Of all these books *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac* and *Walden* are the most characteristic, and may be briefly considered; indeed, Thoreau lives in the public mind chiefly through *Walden*. He is almost "the man of one book."

A Week on the Concord and Merrimac is an account of the journey which Thoreau and his brother made on those rivers in

their own rowboat. Nothing seems to have escaped the lynx eyes of the young naturalist and explorer. The bits of description are full of pleasing color. Better still to the reader of today are the reflections on all sorts of matters suggested by the freedom and the naturalness of the week's outing. The book was completed some years after the experiences related, and the leisurely writing of it afforded an opportunity for seasoning description and narration with philosophy. Certain chapters are really essays; the author occasionally drops into verse—the crudeness of the verse warrants the use of the word "drops"; sometimes he turns literary critic and discourses on style. On the matter of style Thoreau has said many good things:

> A man's whole life is taxed for the least thing well done. It is its net result. Every sentence is the result of a long probation. . . . The word which is best said came nearest to not being spoken at all, for it is cousin to a deed which the speaker could have better done.

> The mind never makes a great and successful effort without a corresponding energy of the body. We are often struck by the force and precision of style to which hard-working men, unpracticed in writing, easily attain, when required to make the effort. As if plainness and vigor and sincerity, the ornaments of style, were better learned on the farm and in the workshop than in the schools.

> A sentence should read as if its author, had he held a plough instead of a pen, could have drawn a furrow deep and straight to the end. The scholar requires hard and serious labor to give an impetus to his thought. He will learn to grasp the pen firmly so, and wield it gracefully and effectively, as an axe or a sword.

Comments like these make *A Week* a stimulating book, while the nature parts of it, including the descriptions of New England village life, entertain those who have a liking for local color. The work did not sell well, and of the thousand copies of the first edition (1849) more than seven hundred were turned over to the author by the booksellers. Thereupon Thoreau wrote in his diary: "I have now a library of nearly nine hundred

volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself. Is it not well that the author should behold the fruit of his labor?"

Walden is the greatest of Thoreau's works. It is a record of his life and thoughts in his cabin at Walden Pond; parts of the book are descriptive, parts are the meditations of a country philosopher; there is no essential unity. The chapters have such headings as "Sounds," "The Bean-Field," "Brute Neighbors," "Higher Laws," "Winter Animals," "Visitors," "The Pond in Winter," "Solitude." Bits of poetry are scattered through the volume, some original, some from the author's wide reading. Personal experiences are related with frank and engaging informality—the cost of living, the preparation of meals, the day's work, association with birds and squirrels. In the chapter called "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" Thoreau says:

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practise resignation, unless it was quite necessary.

Walden is a refreshing book; the breezes blow through it; the pine needles lend their fragrance; the ripples of the little lake make their musical undertone. It is also a wise book: one comes across paragraphs of high and heartening sentiment, which only a poet-philosopher could utter. Here is one, for instance, chosen almost at random:

> Every man is the builder of a temple, called his body, to the god he worships, after a style purely his own; nor can he get off by hammering marble instead. We are all sculptors and painters, and our material is our flesh and blood and bones. Any nobleness begins at once to refine a man's features, any meanness or sensuality to imbrute them.

Literary Characteristics.—Thoreau preaches with earnestness the gospel of individualism. His style is clear, picturesque,

at times musical, and frequently relieved by gentle humor. The sincerity of the man appears in his style: "The one great rule of composition," said he, "is to *speak the truth.*" He accordingly wrote of nature as he saw it, and his descriptions have the natural coloring somewhat heightened by his sense of poetic communion with field and wood and bird and flower. Though he wrote verse, he succeeded best in prose; the poetic form seemed to cramp his freedom of expression. Such sentences as the following show that he was both poet and philosopher:

The bluebird carries the sky on his back.

Only he can be trusted with gifts who can present a face of bronze to expectations.

The tanager flies through the green foliage as if it would ignite the leaves.

Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep.

To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust.

No tree has so fair a bole and so handsome an instep as the beech.

The axiomatic quality of Thoreau's prose often suggests Emerson's, but the style of the two men is essentially different, as one may easily see by reading a few pages from an essay of each. During his lifetime and for many years afterwards Thoreau suffered from comparison with Emerson. It was thought that he was a pale reflection of the "sage of Concord." Not so: we now realize that Thoreau is thoroughly original. His fame has steadily increased, indeed, and there has been a growing demand for his works, including his voluminous *Journal.* He has come to occupy a high and really unique place in American literature.

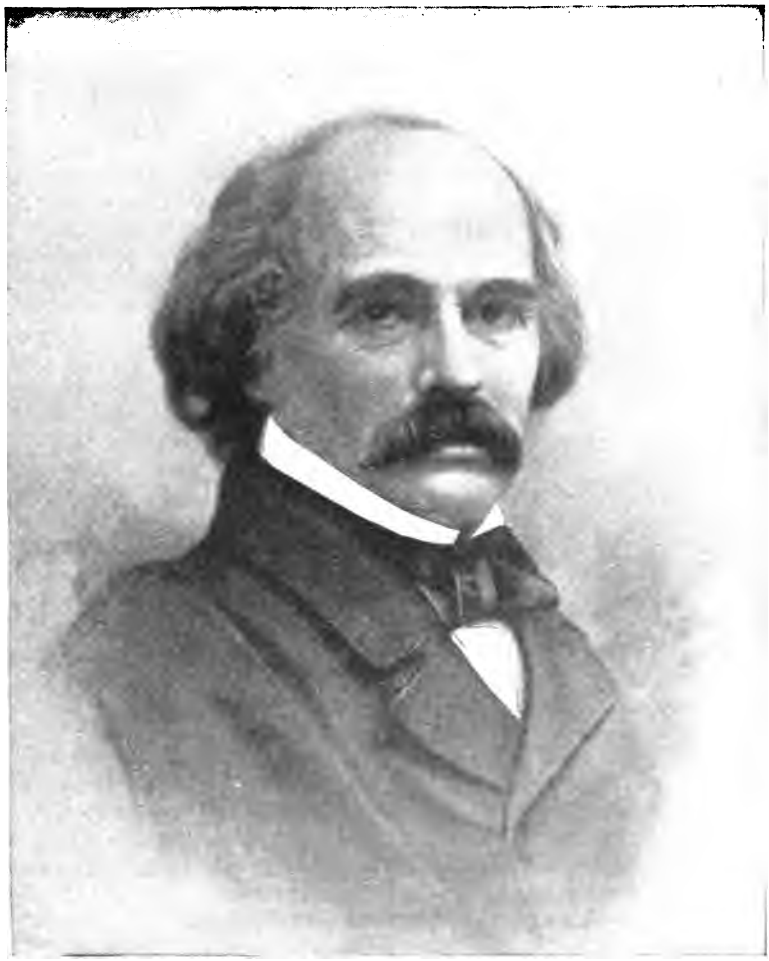
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

His Life.—Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts, July 4, 1804, son of a sea captain and direct descendant of William Hathorne (the "w" was inserted in the name by Nathaniel), who came over with John Winthrop on the *Arabella*. This first American ancestor, strong Puritan that he was, persecuted the Quakers, and his son John was a judge in the famous witchcraft trials. Later on, the men of the family became sea captains, and their social importance in Salem was thereby lessened.

The novelist's grandfather is the hero of the Revolutionary ballad called "Bold Hathorne." Nathaniel's father died when the boy was only four years old, and his rearing was left to his mother, a somewhat eccentric woman who loved to be alone. For forty years, in fact, after her husband's death she took her meals alone in her room, and so the children found in her no intimate companionship, though she could hardly be called a morbid woman. This fondness for seclusion had its effect on her son, whose love of loneliness was a marked characteristic. When he was fourteen years old, the family moved to the neighborhood of Sebago Lake in Maine, where they lived for a year or more. Here the boy roamed the forests and reveled in the solitudes. He returned to Salem to prepare for college under the direction of an uncle, and in 1821 entered Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine.

Hawthorne was a fairly good student; in English composition he may be said to have distinguished himself. He was a robust, athletic, handsome lad, fond of fishing and hunting, and of wandering in the woods and along the streams. He seems to have been sociable enough with a few congenial companions and to have had a good time, taking his part in college escapades. Among his fellow students were Longfellow, Horatio Bridge, and Franklin Pierce, with the last two of whom he kept up through life an intimate friendship. While in college, if we may judge from his dedication to the volume called *Snow-Image and Other Tales*, he was meditating a literary career, though he wrote nothing of special significance during those four academic years. In 1825 he graduated at Bowdoin and returned to Salem.

The next twelve or thirteen years Hawthorne spent in retirement at Salem, leading the life of a recluse. He was learning his art, however; in 1828 he paid one hundred dollars for the publication of *Fanshawe*, an immature romance of college life. The book was not successful, and the author in chagrin burned the unsold copies. The following years were nevertheless employed to good advantage; Hawthorne



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

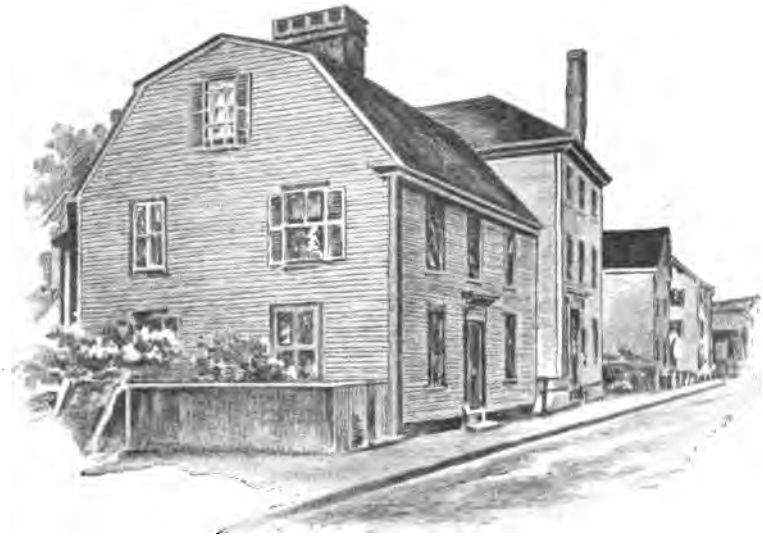
was reflecting, studying Salem and its neighborhood, and serving a severe literary apprenticeship. He lived during the day in the seclusion of his room, dreaming, reading, writing; at night he issued forth for lonely walks by the sea or in the woodland paths or through the narrow little streets of witch-haunted Salem. He made few friends; indeed, he knew few people, and doubtless those he did know regarded him as an eccentric and silent being, who lived in another world apart.

A number of sketches and short stories by Hawthorne were published in the early 'thirties in several New England magazines, among which was *The Token*, a popular "annual" of the day edited by S. G. Goodrich, who as "Peter Parley" wrote many books for young people. For this and other periodicals Hawthorne had become a more or less regular contributor; he had, however, so far published nothing over his own signature. In 1837 his friend Bridge, without the author's knowledge, induced a publisher to bring out a collection of Hawthorne's stories under the title, *Twice-Told Tales*. This enjoyed a fairly good sale and greatly increased his reputation. Meanwhile the Peabodys, a prominent Salem family, had begun to take an interest in the obscure author; Miss Sophia Peabody, a young lady of artistic tastes, had drawn illustrations for his story, "The Gentle Boy." The outcome of this association was an engagement between Hawthorne and Miss Peabody.

Before he could support a wife, however, it was necessary for Hawthorne to find a more profitable occupation than authorship. Through the efforts of friends he was appointed in 1839 to a position in the Boston custom-house, where he remained two years, weighing cargoes and keeping tally as the vessels were unloaded. These practical duties he seems to have performed with success, if without enthusiasm. With the change of administration at Washington he lost his place. His savings, amounting to about one thousand dollars, he invested in the Brook Farm enterprise, with a view to making a home there for Miss Peabody, whom he hoped to marry the next year. Hawthorne was not an ardent transcendentalist, but the idealistic aims of the Brook Farm enthusiasts appealed to him, and he went to work with a right good will. A year's residence in this community was enough: manual labor, of which he conscientiously did his daily share, could not long attract one who was destined for another vocation. His *Note-Books* give in detail his impressions of the activities of Brook Farm. He had lost all his money, but he had gained valuable experience; and without further delay, he married and went to Concord to live in the Old Manse.

From 1842 to 1846 Hawthorne and his wife lived happily in the old house near the famous bridge where the Concord farmers "fired the shot heard round the world." In the congenial atmosphere of this

intellectual center he met such men as Emerson, Thoreau, and Channing, and he roamed the woods and explored the streams in almost idyllic content. Out of this leisure grew *Mosses from an Old Manse* and other tales, but the monetary returns were slight. In 1846 the Democratic administration, through the influence of his friend Pierce, gave him the office of surveyor of customs at Salem. The three years from 1846 to 1849 he spent in his native town in this position, the duties of which he faithfully performed, in spite of the opposition of local politicians, who were displeased at the appointment of a non-resident.



HAWTHORNE'S BIRTHPLACE
Salem, Mass.

Hawthorne did not mingle freely with his fellow-townsmen, and that also made against his popularity. The political whirligig brought its revenges, and in 1849 he was displaced. When in some depression of spirit he told his wife of his change of fortune, she cheerfully replied: "Oh, then you can write your book." This proved to be *The Scarlet Letter*, which appeared the next year. The following two years were spent at Lenox, Massachusetts, and at West Newton, near Boston, in the composition of *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*.

In 1852 Hawthorne returned to Concord, where he had purchased the little house on the road beyond Emerson's, since known as The Wayside, once the home of Bronson Alcott, a leading transcendentalist. The house is now visited by literary pilgrims, and the little bower back of it on the hillside among the pine trees is still pointed out as Hawthorne's out-of-door study. This was his American home for the rest of his life. His college mate, Franklin Pierce, came to the presidency in 1853, and the same year the author was made consul to Liverpool. This gave him an opportunity for travel and study, though he did not neglect the duties of his office; he seems, however, to have cared little for foreign social life, and, quite unlike Irving, he met few literary men. After four years' service, he resigned the Liverpool consulship and spent the next three years traveling on the continent; much of this time was passed in Rome, where he gathered material for *The Marble Faun* finishing it in England in 1859.

Hawthorne returned to America in 1860, having lived abroad seven years. He had abundance of material for many romances, as his voluminous *Note-Books* show, and he purposed to settle down at Concord for years of authorship. These plans were not to be realized. The war between the North and the South was on; Hawthorne, a man of peace and in love with the quiet life, was depressed at the disturbed condition of the country; the effect was bad on so sensitive a soul. After traveling about in search of health, he died at Plymouth, New Hampshire, in May, 1864, in the company of his faithful friend, ex-President Pierce, with whom he was making a journey to the White Mountains. His grave is in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, Concord.

His Personality.—Physically Hawthorne was an uncommonly handsome man; this picture of him in his earlier manhood by his son Julian, though perhaps slightly idealized, is in the main doubtless correct: "He was five feet, ten and a half inches in height, broad-shouldered, but of a light, athletic build, not weighing more than one hundred and fifty pounds. His limbs were beautifully formed, and the moulding of his neck and throat was as fine as anything in antique sculpture. His hair, which had a long, curving wave in it, approached blackness in color; his head was large and grandly developed; his eyebrows were dark and heavy, with a superb arch and space beneath. His nose was straight but the contour of his chin was Roman. . . . . His eyes were large, dark blue, brilliant, and full

of varied expression. Bayard Taylor used to say that they were the only eyes he had ever known flash fire. . . . His complexion was delicate and transparent, rather dark than light, with a ruddy tinge in the cheeks. . . . Up to the time he was forty years old, he could clear a height of five feet at a standing jump. His voice, which was low and deep in ordinary conversation, had astounding volume when he chose to give full vent to it."

Hawthorne had a somewhat shy and retiring nature, given much to dreaming and meditation. All his life he was more or less solitary, though with congenial companions he was sociable enough; at college, as we have seen, he made friends and was a leader in good fellowship; his family life was beautiful. From the great movements of his time he lived apart, busied with problems of conscience rooted in romance. He was brooding and introspective. New people he did not care to meet, nor was he anything of a partisan. Though he lived in one of the most critical periods of American history, he apparently had little personal interest in the mighty struggle which was convulsing the nation. His enthusiasms were intellectual rather than social; if there be some ground for charging him with selfishness, it is lost sight of in the remembrance of his steadfast devotion to his friends, his conscientious performance of unpleasant bread-winning tasks, and his singular consecration to his art.

His Works.—The writings of Hawthorne may be divided into two general groups—(1) the **Tales** and **Sketches,** and (2) the **Long Romances.** The first group includes *Twice-Told Tales* (1837), *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales* (1851), *A Wonder-Book* (1851), *Tanglewood Tales* (1853). The last two collections are children's stories, to which should be added the earlier *Grandfather's Chair* (1841), a volume of simple narratives from New England history. The second group consists of the four long romances,

The Scarlet Letter (1851), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852), and *The Marble Faun* (1860).

The Tales. The volumes of tales represent the work of the first forty-five years of Hawthorne's life. Some of them appeared in periodicals before 1837, when the first series of *Twice-Told Tales* was published. In this volume, as finally completed, are to be found such pieces as "The Gray Champion," "The Minister's Black Veil,' '"The May-Pole of Merry Mount," "A Rill from the Town Pump," "Wakefield,"

THE OLD MANSE
Home of Hawthorne (1842-'46)

"Dr. Heidegger's Experiment," "The Ambitious Guest," and "The White Old Maid." The name of the collection was probably suggested by the fact that many of the stories were already familiar traditions; it may be, too, that the author recalled the line from *King John*—"Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale." The second volume of tales and sketches, *Mosses from an Old Manse*, contains the well-known "Rappaccini's Daughter" and "The Birthmark." The first piece in the book is a delightful sketch called "The Old Manse." The

author's Concord home by that name furnished the title to the volume, and most of the stories were written there. The third volume of the series, *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales*, includes "The Great Stone Face" and "Ethan Brand."

The pieces that make up these volumes fall naturally into three fairly well-defined groups: (1) Reflective essays or sketches on familiar scenes of daily life, reminding one of Addison's papers in *The Spectator*; (2) Stories based on dramatic incidents in New England history or tradition, each of which, as seen through the mist of years, formed some sort of crisis; and (3) Stories or sketches of an allegorical nature, delicately setting forth some peculiar situation or experience. The last are, in the popular mind, most characteristic of Hawthorne's genius.

To the first group belong such sketches as "A Rill from the Town Pump," "Sights from a Steeple," "Sunday at Home," and "The Old Manse." These pieces resemble the informal, chatty essay, which Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith wrote in eighteenth century English literature and of which Irving was a master. Indeed, Hawthorne's sketches are very like Irving's in their limited range, humor, and reflective quality. They have little or no plot; the writer leisurely plays with the subject; the result is a bit of impressionism, an illuminated picture of familiar scenes; it may be a slight character-sketch. Sometimes we are entertained by viewing for a little while an etching of New England village life. Poe, in his admirable essay on Hawthorne's *Tales*, remarks that Addison, Irving, and Hawthorne "have in common that tranquil and subdued manner which I have chosen to denominate *repose*." That statement happily characterizes Hawthorne's essay-sketches.

The second group includes such historical tales and pastels as "The May-Pole of Merry Mount," "The Gray Champion," and "Endicott and the Red Cross." Seizing upon some dramatic incident of colonial legend, Hawthorne invests it with lasting interest. At a critical moment, when the old order is about

to give place to the new, or when some immemorial custom is about to vanish, he chooses his scene. Hence we have a vivid study in contrast. There is a tableau, rising action, a climax. The effect is strikingly dramatic; the sudden transition from the static to the dynamic appeals to the imagination and fixes the event in the memory. Take, for instance, the appearance of the stern Puritan Endicott in the midst of the May-pole festivities at Merry Mount; or the mysterious figure of the Gray Champion suddenly stalking before the host of the Puritans' oppressors to announce the downfall of James II and the coming of a Protestant king to the throne; or the bold act of John Endicott, tearing the red cross from the New England banner in the presence of the soldiers and of the multitude. The characters who perform these exploits loom larger than in nature; in Hawthorne's hands they come to have almost an allegorical significance. Thus, the Gray Champion seems to be the hereditary spirit of Puritan traditions appearing at a critical moment, and Endicott the incarnation of militant Puritanism.

OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN
Original of the "Great Stone Face," White Mountains, N. H.

It is in the third class of stories, however, that Hawthorne is at his best—stories in which there is a faint allegory ending in an implied or stated moral lesson. Prominent among these are "The Great Stone Face," "The Birthmark," "Rappaccini's

Daughter," and "Ethan Brand." The first, probably the most familiar of the *Tales*, artistically sets forth the truth that real success should not be measured by material standards; the second impresses the lesson that to be perfect and at the same time human is impossible; the third shows the baneful results of scientific curiosity in the case of an Italian physician, who has brought up his daughter in a garden of poisonous flowers, until her own system is so saturated with their exhalations that whatever she breathes on dies. All things considered, perhaps the most powerful of them all is "Ethan Brand," the story of the lime-burner, who went on a search for the unpardonable sin, only to find it at last in his own hard, unsympathetic heart, which had lost the sense of human brotherhood: "Thus Ethan Brand became a fiend. He began to be so from the moment that his moral nature had ceased to keep the pace of improvement with his intellect."

This group of stories alone would entitle Hawthorne to be called one of the few supreme masters of the short-story form in the world. They differ from those of Poe, the father of the modern short story, in their appeal to the conscience as well as in their somewhat looser structure; Poe's stories, as will be shown in the next chapter, are severely intellectual and rigidly unified. Hawthorne's stories differ from Irving's in ethical quality and in greater compactness of form and climactic effect. A discussion of the short story as a form must be deferred until Poe is considered; suffice it to say here that contemporaneously with Poe, the great New England artist was producing stories on the mighty moral themes of fate and sin, tinged with allegory and spiritualized with symbol, which display the perfect flowering of the Puritan conscience.

Hawthorne's children's stories are among the most delightful in our literature. He loved children and he knew how to adapt himself to their understanding. Accordingly, we find in his *Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales* a charming recital of classic myths for the youthful mind. These stories are of

course minor efforts as compared with those just considered, but they serve to show how Hawthorne adorned whatever he touched.

The Long Romances. *The Scarlet Letter*, the first of the long romances, appeared in 1850. Five thousand copies were printed as the first edition; to the surprise of the publisher and the greater surprise of the author, who had a little while before called himself "the most unpopular writer in America," a second edition was necessary in less than two weeks. The book was written in Salem under rather depressing circumstances, following Hawthorne's loss of his position at the old custom-house and the death of his mother. It was published in Boston by his friend, James T. Fields. At last, at the age of forty-six, the author's fame was firmly established.

The scene of *The Scarlet Letter* is laid in Boston in the early Puritan period. The germ of the story may be found in one of the *Twice-Told Tales*, "Endicott and the Red Cross," in which reference is made to a young woman "whose doom it was to wear the letter A on the breast of her gown, in the eyes of all the world and her own children." In *The Scarlet Letter* there are four principal characters, Hester Prynne, the Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, Little Pearl, and old Roger Chillingworth. Hester Prynne, the sinning and repentant woman, expiates in charitable service and suffering her sin with Dimmesdale, who after years of silent agony makes confession before the multitude and dies; little Pearl is the elfish child of Hester and Dimmesdale, and flits through the story like a darksome fairy; old Roger Chillingworth, the physician, is an avenging fury to the guilty pair, but is entangled at last in his own revengeful malice.

The romance is a study of the effect of one great sin upon these four persons and upon the community. Such a psychological problem, with its dark background of Puritan tradition, was quite in harmony with Hawthorne's genius, and he worked it out with compelling power. The theme is a somber one,

but it is relieved by stretches of musical language, thrilling passages of soul-analysis, and by the elfin presence of little Pearl. Interest centers in the characters, who move onward to their doom like the fated personages of a Greek drama, expiating their transgressions under inexorable law. The plot is slight, and yet so firmly does *The Scarlet Letter* grip the mind, that one may read it many times without passing from under the spell of the literary artist who wove the magic web.

Closely following *The Scarlet Letter* came *The House of the Seven Gables*, written at Lenox amid cheerful surroundings. It had an immediate popularity, which has continued even to these days. The scene is in Salem, familiar to Hawthorne from childhood; it would be futile, however, to insist that the house now pointed out is the veritable seven-gabled mansion of the story. Doubtless the author had in mind a composite picture with gables from several houses. The modern setting of *The House of the Seven Gables* makes it more realistic and human than the first novel, though the main interest is, of course, in an old wrong working its revenge on a later generation. And so the flavor of the book is distinctly antique. The theme is the effect of hereditary guilt on innocent posterity. At last, however, the ancient curse against the Pyncheons falls in dramatic manner on old Judge Pyncheon; the expiation is complete, and the innocent sufferers come into their rightful inheritance. The autumn-like atmosphere of *The House of the Seven Gables* is warmed and brightened by the winning personality of Phoebe Pyncheon, whose cheery smile brings customers to Miss Hepzibah's cent shop. The scenes in and around this little shop are among the most delightful touches of local color in American fiction.

The Blithedale Romance, the third of Hawthorne's longer stories, is based in part at least on his experiences and observations as a member of the Brook Farm Community, the socialist settlement already described. From his *Note-Books*, in which he jotted down his impressions while a resident, he took the

material for some of the incidents; "Blithedale" is a sort of poetic name for Brook Farm. The characters are, he asserts, entirely fictitious, though earlier readers identified the prominent ones with certain well-known persons; it was thought, in particular, that Zenobia was intended for Margaret Fuller, but Hawthorne denied this. The book expresses his opinion on social reform movements, of which the idealistic community at West Roxbury was a conspicuous example. The hero is a professional reformer, whose zeal for one kind of philanthropy has made him narrow and selfish. In a sense *The Blithedale Romance* is a satire, and it is therefore not in Hawthorne's best vein. There is no question of sin and retribution, no great moral problem, as in his other novels. The one powerful figure is Zenobia, splendid creature of stormy, passionate impulse, who ranks along with Hester of *The Scarlet Letter* and Miriam of *The Marble Faun.*

The Marble Faun, last of the great romances, was begun in Italy and finished in England. The scene is in Rome; the characters, mostly Americans transferred to Italian soil, are Miriam and her faun lover, Donatello, Hilda and her sculptor lover, Kenyon. The story centers about Donatello and his love, the other pair of lovers being purely subsidiary. Donatello, morally undeveloped, commits a murder; then comes his awakening; through the knowledge of sin his faunlike nature becomes human, the animal changes into a man. Through crime and suffering a conscience is gradually evolved; the loss of innocence brings a sense of moral responsibility. That is the central theme of the book. Donatello is the creature of primeval innocence, the Marble Faun of Praxiteles (the famous statue in the Capitoline Museum in Rome) endued with life. Miriam is the beautiful, red-blooded, almost voluptuous, woman, who suffers with her lover, Donatello; over her life some mysterious crime committed long ago, has thrown its shadow. Hilda, gentle maiden keeping vigil in her tower among the doves, is the embodiment of white-souled innocence.

The Marble Faun lacks unity of plot; stretches of description and moralizing break the continuity; the characters seem somewhat shadowy and unconvincing; the work is a romantic allegory. Matter-of-fact readers, feeling that the ending was unsatisfactory, demanded a final explanatory chapter; this certainly added nothing to the story, but rather spoiled the artistic effect. In England the book was published under the title, "Transformation," which indicates the symbolical nature of the story. Its value as a guidebook to Rome has long been recognized, and English and American visitors to the eternal city still take along with them this sympathetic and poetic interpreter of historic scenes and treasures.

Characteristics and Contribution.—In his choice of subjects Hawthorne showed a decided preference for moral problems. The theme of *The Scarlet Letter*, as we have seen, is the effect of sin on the individual soul; of *The House of the Seven Gables*, the suffering entailed on posterity by an ancient wrong; of *The Marble Faun*, the transformation of the animal to the man through crime. The workings of the conscience, sin and retribution, human struggle with personal or inherited ill-doing, were matters of vital interest to Hawthorne; for the theological aspects of these questions, as the old Puritans discussed them, he cared not. He shows, however, the Puritan attitude in his fondness for dealing with the individual, which is, at bottom, also characteristic of the transcendentalists. Hawthorne was a strong individualist; he concerned himself little with the social group. He wrote best when he was treating of the past; a rich background of tradition was almost a necessity with him.

His method of handling his subjects was through allegory and symbol. Herein he resembles Spenser and Bunyan. An early favorite of his, as with so many men of poetic natures, was Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, the influence of which upon his thought and style was very great; his liking for Spenser's poem is evidenced by the fact that he named his first child "Una,"

from one of the heroines in that allegory. He was also fond of *Pilgrim's Progress*. Moreover, it is pleasant to remember that Hawthorne's first American ancestor, who came over with John Winthrop, is said to have brought with him a copy of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, a romantic book not usually associated with the Puritan temper. It is no wonder, then, that Hawthorne expressed himself in allegory and symbol. Throughout his writings he makes use of physical images as concrete symbols of moral truth. Each of the three great romances, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, and *The Marble Faun*, is named after a specific physical figure. In *Twice-Told Tales*, according to Professor C. Alphonso Smith, "the word symbol occurs twenty-five times, the word emblem twenty times. Among his favorite symbols may be mentioned a shroud, a black veil, a carbuncle, a snake, a mantle, a butterfly, a cross, and a scarlet letter."[1] Others will occur to the thoughtful reader. Recall, for instance, the rose before Hester's prison-door and the brilliant flower in Zenobia's dark hair. Hawthorne is our greatest symbolist.

Hawthorne's style has purity, elevation, and at times an exquisite musical cadence. It is well modulated and exceedingly pleasing to the ear, and it is always artistically sustained. Some of the short stories might be called prose poems, and there are passages in the long romances, particularly in *The Scarlet Letter*, which one is tempted to read again and again through sheer delight in the verbal harmony. Take, for instance, this bit of description from "Ethan Brand," picturing the early morning in the mountains:

> Old Greylock was glorified with a golden cloud upon his head. Scattered likewise over the breasts of the surrounding mountains there were heaps of hoary mist, in fantastic shapes, some of them far down into the valley, others high up towards the summits, and still others, of the same family of mist or cloud, hovering in the gold radiance of the upper atmosphere. Stepping from one to another of the clouds that rested

[1] C. Alphonso Smith: "The American Short Story," p. 21.

on the hills, and thence to the loftier brotherhood that sailed in the air, it seemed almost as if a mortal man might ascend into the heavenly regions. Earth was so mingled with sky that it was a day-dream to look at it.

Hawthorne's chief contribution to our literature has been the romance of Puritanism. He was far enough from the sinister gloom of those forbidding times to find romantic material hidden away under the outward crust of intolerance that hardened the old New England conscience. By the magic alchemy of his imagination this material suffered, as it were, "a sea-change into something rich and strange." The supernatural, the mysterious, fascinated him whenever he found therein some moral value, Puritan as he still was, born out of time. In that mystic past he was rooted; in the present and its reforms he showed a curious lack of interest; his attitude, indeed, toward the life and thought of his day was one of detachment. His greatest achievement is *The Scarlet Letter*, so far the finest product in the history of American fiction; and he enjoys the rare distinction of having succeeded equally well with long romances and short stories.

Hawthorne's numerous *Note-Books*, kept with great faithfulness all his life, contain the germs of almost endless stories. He had a way of writing down hints for stories, embryo plots, for possible development. His creative ingenuity seems never to have flagged. The brooding habit of his mind and the long years of solitude made this material grow into many volumes. He left several unfinished romances, and when death came, the flower of his imagination had not withered.

THE CAMBRIDGE GROUP

Boston was of course the center of New England culture; Cambridge was an immediate suburb of Boston, and Concord a distant suburb. For the sake of clearness in classification, however, it has seemed best to group the Concord writers to

themselves, though it must be understood that intellectually they belong to the Boston area. Cambridge in those days was a town of large, shady yards, roomy mansions, gardens, and broad streets—little more, indeed, than an overgrown village, where a close neighborliness prevailed among the ancestral homes.

Dominating the intellectual life of the region and a fostering mother of genius, was Harvard College, whose history is contemporary with that of New England. In the years when her sons were winning their laurels in letters, Harvard was not the great university of to-day; probably the "humanities" meant more to the individual then, because the academic

JOHNSON GATE, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

community was smaller and the association among its members was closer. And then, too, men who were teaching literature were also creators of literature; in Longfellow and Lowell the boys found living poets as interpreters of dead poets; and Holmes over in the medical school was seasoning anatomy with wit and humor.

Just across the Charles in Boston the *Atlantic Monthly* had been started in 1857, and its first contributors were these Cambridge men. Its ideals were purely literary, and to these early traditions it has happily continued faithful. It would be difficult, indeed, to estimate the influence of this periodical in American literature; in its columns much that we now call

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW[1]

"standard literature" first appeared, and its high tone has done much to give character and distinction to our literary life.

The Cambridge group proper consists of Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes; to these should be added several of the historians and orators, whose fame, while not so great as that of the poets and essayists, is just as enduring.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

His Life.—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine, February 27, 1807, the son of a prominent lawyer there. On his mother's side he was descended from John and Priscilla Alden of the Plymouth colony; on his father's, his ancestry were also cultivated people. His father and grandfather were graduates of Harvard. In his boyhood at Portland Longfellow showed those characteristics for which he was noted in later years—gentleness, studiousness, and fondness for reading. The rougher sports of youth he did not like, and he was accordingly

[1] Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

sent to private schools. When he was thirteen his poem, the "Battle of Lovell's Pond," the crude forerunner of his fine narrative verse, was printed in the *Portland Gazette*. In these early years his favorite work was Irving's *Sketch-Book*, then appearing in parts; his boyhood poets seem to have been Moore, Cowper, and Ossian. At Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, whither he went in 1822 to enter the sophomore class, he made an excellent record. Here he had as fellow-students Franklin Pierce and Nathaniel Hawthorne; the latter was a classmate.

After Longfellow's graduation in 1825, his father wished him to study law, but the son had already begun to look towards literature as a profession. "I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature," he wrote to his father during his last year in college; "my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and every earthly thought centers in it." Fortunately about this time the trustees of Bowdoin offered to establish a professorship of modern languages for the young scholar, provided he would spend several years abroad preparing for his duties. This offer was accepted, and in 1826, after reading law more or less indifferently for a while, he sailed for Europe. For the next three years he was a diligent student of French, Italian, and Spanish, and by the end of his stay he had acquired a good practical knowledge of these languages.

From 1829 to 1834 Longfellow was a professor at Bowdoin College. He performed his duties with conscientious devotion, and he published textbooks on the Romance languages, the serious study of which was just beginning in America. His reputation as a teacher and scholar soon reached Cambridge, with the result that in 1834 he was offered the Smith Professorship of Romance languages at Harvard, the suggestion being added that he should spend a year or more abroad perfecting himself in German. This offer he eagerly accepted, and with his wife, who was Mary Potter of Portland, he went to Europe for further study. Mrs. Longfellow died in Holland, and the following months were darkened by this great sorrow. Longfellow studied and read faithfully, however, and succeeded in mastering the German language. His stay in Germany broadened and deepened his culture; the effects of it, indeed, may be seen in his prose romance, *Hyperion*, as well as in numerous shorter poems.

Longfellow taught at Harvard from 1836 to 1854. He was a good, faithful instructor, but gradually the labors of the classroom wore upon him, and he finally resigned his professorship in order to give all his time to poetry. In 1843 he married Miss Frances Appleton, whom he had met some years before while in Germany, and he received as a gift from her father the historic old Craigie House on Brattle Street, once Washington's headquarters. Here the poet gathered about him

a host of friends and here his best work was done. He was singularly happy in his domestic life; loved by all the literary men of Boston and Cambridge, he spent his days in congenial surroundings. Through his marriage and the income from his poems he was financially independent, and in the devotion of his family and neighbors he was a happy man. He made other trips abroad, and was welcomed everywhere as the most popular of American poets.

The tragedy of Longfellow's life happened in 1861, when one day in the library Mrs. Longfellow's dress caught fire and she was fatally burned. The poet, who was himself severely injured in attempting to save her, was for many months a prey to his great grief, and the shadow of this sorrow was never wholly lifted from his life. To alleviate it, he turned with energy to the translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, at which he steadily worked for years. The later life of the poet was peaceful in the love of his children and friends and in the honors which came to him in his own country and in foreign lands. In 1868-'69, while he was in England, the universities of Oxford and Cambridge conferred honorary degrees upon him. By general consent, he was the laureate of the popular heart. The end came at Craigie House on March 24, 1882, and he was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge. Less than a month before, the public school children all over the United States had celebrated the seventy-fifth birthday of the gentle poet.

His Personality.—Gentleness and purity of character, loveliness of life, refinement of culture, are the qualities most conspicuous in Longfellow. His writings and his life happily agree. He was a man of strong domestic virtues, and he won the affection of a large circle of men and women and children. Children loved him because he loved them. He was happiest at home with his own children. His presence in Cambridge was a benediction. His heart was big and gentle, and that made him a lovable gentleman, full of sweetness and light. Courage and strength he had, but it was the quiet, inward kind.

For the several reforms of his time and locality Longfellow had no very deep concern: the transcendental movement, for instance, which stirred Emerson and other literary men, seems to have made little or no impression on him; in the anti-slavery agitation he was only mildly interested. It is true that he wrote seven poems on slavery as he was returning from Europe

in 1842, but he did not include them in the first edition of his works. He was of course opposed to slavery, but he was no partisan; on that subject, as indeed on all others, his attitude was one of calm conviction without aggressiveness. The moral vein in him was deep enough, but it was not militant.

His Works.—The writings of Longfellow consist of the prose works, *Outre-Mer*, *Hyperion*, and *Kavanagh*; translations from European poets, particularly the version of Dante's *Divine Comedy*; and the great body of original poetry, the fame of which has kept from perishing all else he did, with the probable exception of the Dante translation.

The prose work may be passed over with only a brief mention. The earliest book, *Outre-Mer* ("Beyond the Sea"), is a series of sketches of scenes and impressions during his first stay in Europe, originally contributed to magazines. It is in the manner of the *Sketch-Book*, and is of no great value except as a sort of sentimental first-fruits of a promising youth. The next work, *Hyperion* (1839), is a prose romance growing out of his second trip abroad. It is the story of the unsuccessful wooing of a heroine named Mary Ashburton by a youth named Paul Flemming. The scene is laid in Germany and Switzerland, and the plot and setting reflect much of Longfellow's own experience. The book is in parts a thinly veiled autobiography, and is all the more interesting in view of the author's marriage later to Miss Appleton, of whom the heroine is a portrait. The story abounds in youthful sentiment expressed in poetic prose. The last prose work of Longfellow, *Kavanagh* (1849), is a romance of life in a Massachusetts village, where Longfellow had spent a summer. The hero, Kavanagh, is a learned and attractive young clergyman, to whom two fair members of his congregation are equally devoted. He marries one of them, and the other in consequence slowly pines away. The story is an idealized transcript of village life, but not vital.

Longfellow's translations include many lyrics and ballads from the Spanish, French, Italian, Scandinavian, and German.

Perhaps the most familiar of these is the little poem called "Beware," from the German, the first two stanzas of which are:

I know a maiden fair to see,
Take care!
She can both false and friendly be,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not!
She is fooling thee!

She has two eyes, so soft and brown,
Take care!
She gives a side-glance and looks down,
Beware! Beware!
Trust her not!
She is fooling thee!

Of higher quality is his version of Uhland's "The Castle by the Sea," in which is reproduced much of the magic, haunting tone of the original. The translation of Dante (1867), was, as already mentioned, a labor of consolation following the death of the poet's wife, as Bryant's rendering of Homer had been. Longfellow's Dante is the most faithful verse translation of that classic in the English language, but its very literalness hampers the free expression of the spirit of the original. Still, the work is a monument to American scholarship as well as to the loving patience and poetic sympathy of Longfellow.

Apart from the prose and the translations stands the large body of Longfellow's original verse, by which he will continue to be judged. It is difficult to make any exact general classification of this. For the sake of convenience, however, we may roughly divide his poetry into (1) **Shorter Lyric** and **Narrative Poems,** (2) **Ballads Proper,** (3) **Longer Narrative Poems,** and (4) **Dramatic Compositions.** Among the shorter lyric and narrative poems are those included in his earliest collection, *Voices of the Night* (1839), such as "A Psalm of Life," "Hymn to the Night," and "Footsteps of Angels"; such familiar poems as "The Village Blacksmith," "The Rainy

Day," "Excelsior," "The Day is Done," "Maidenhood," "The Bridge," "The Arsenal at Springfield," "Resignation," "The Building of the Ship," "The Children's Hour," and "The Old Clock on the Stairs"; and the six Sonnets prefixed to the translation of Dante. To the Ballads belong "The Skeleton in Armour," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," and the spirited "Paul Revere's Ride" and "King Robert of Sicily" (both found in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*). The longer narrative poems are *Evangeline, Hiawatha, The Courtship of Miles Standish,* and

CRAIGIE HOUSE
Home of Longfellow, Cambridge, Mass.

the collection of stories called *Tales of a Wayside Inn.* The principal dramatic compositions are *The Spanish Student, Christus,* and *The Masque of Pandora.* This is, of course, an imperfect enumeration; readers of Longfellow will easily recall other important poems not mentioned in so brief an account. The three most famous longer poems demand separate consideration.

Evangeline. *Evangeline,* Longfellow's first long narrative poem, was published in 1847. Its success was immediate and pronounced, and this popularity has continued. The incident on which the poem is based, namely, the separation of a maiden

from her lover and her long search for him only to find him dying in a hospital, is said to have been related to Longfellow by Hawthorne one day at dinner at Craigie House. The pathos of the story, the romantic atmosphere of Acadia with its pastoral life, the wanderings of the suffering exiles, all appealed to the sensitive and pensive poet. He had never been in Nova Scotia—the happy land from which the French were expelled by the British in 1755—nor had he ever seen the Mississippi, along which his heroine journeys looking for her lover; but he read a history or two on the dispersion of the Acadians, saw a diorama of the valley of the Mississippi, and heard from travelers accounts of the region. He let his imagination play upon the scenes, and wrote a charming idyl of "the forest primeval" and "the beauty and strength of woman's devotion."

Evangeline is written in lilting hexameters, an unusual meter in English, but in the hands of Longfellow it became a fitting form of expression for the touching experiences of the lovers torn apart on their marriage-day. The poem is full of sad, haunting music, in a minor key, which a sympathetic reading aloud brings out as exquisite harmony. The dreamy, golden haze, which hovers about the landscape in the beginning, vanishes in the confusion that attends the departure of the Acadians and the burning of the village; then the gloom deepens through the weary years, lighted up at last for a fleeting moment by the final meeting and the faint recognition.

Hiawatha. In 1855 appeared *Hiawatha*, so far the most successful attempt to immortalize Indian life and legends in poetry. Much had hitherto been written about the Indian, some of it highly idealized, some of it objectionably realistic; but Longfellow familiarized himself with the traditions of the race and in popular meter made them the common possession of readers. His material he got largely from Schoolcraft's book on the Indians of the Northwest, their myths and other oral legends. The poet had not visited the places he described, nor did he have any intimate knowledge of Indian character,

but, as in his other poems on legendary subjects, his fancy built up out of other men's facts a fascinating story essentially true in its larger aspects. The choice of the rhymeless, four-beat measure (trochaic tetrameter) was a happy one; indeed, it may be safely said that the popularity of Hiawatha is due as much to the meter as to the matter. It easily lends itself to memorizing and, what readers were quick to observe, to parody. Few American poems have been more widely parodied; that, however, is a species of the flattery of imitation. The meter was avowedly borrowed from the Finnish epic, *Kalevala*.

All young readers love *Hiawatha*, and many older ones, too. The childhood, youthful experiences, hunting and fishing, adventures, wooing and wedding, of Hiawatha; the famine, the death of the lovely Minnehaha, the coming of the white man, and the departure of Hiawatha "westward, westward," —all have their charm, and all reveal the deep primal poetry of Indian folklore. Who has not been touched with a kind of awe, tinged with pensive sadness, at the final lines that tell of Hiawatha sailing into the fiery sunset, like some American King Arthur passing to his enchanted "island-valley of Avilion," the Indian's "happy hunting-ground"?

And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long trail and track of splendor,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, westward, Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.
And the people from the margin
Watched him floating, rising, sinking,
Till the birch canoe seemed lifted
High into that sea of splendor,
Till it sank into the vapors
Like the new moon slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance,

Thus the poem *Hiawatha* has an epic significance; it resembles an allegory in which the main incidents and characters are more or less symbolical of the history of the race. Hiawatha himself is the racial prophet and hero, looming larger than life and embodying all the virtues of his people: with the coming of the "pale face" his work is done, and so he vanishes. The glory of the "red man" has departed.

The Courtship of Miles Standish. The last of the three long narrative poems, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, was published in 1858. It is in many respects the most delightful of the three; certainly it is the most human. Longfellow, like Bryant, traced his descent from John and Priscilla Alden, and the subject was, therefore, of personal interest to him. Priscilla's famous reply to John about speaking for himself had long been a tradition in the Longfellow family. The poem abounds in good touches: the blunt and business-like soldier, Miles Standish, who insists that "if you wish a thing to be well done, you must do it yourself," and yet sends John Alden to woo Priscilla for him; the archness of the maiden, who helps Alden to say out the promptings of his heart; the homely pictures of Puritan domestic life; the happy ending, and the dramatic reappearance of Standish. There is far more humor in *The Courtship of Miles Standish* than is commonly found in Longfellow's writings. There is considerable action also; the story has variety, movement, and a distinct dramatic quality, so that the interest does not flag. The hexameter line is used with even greater skill than in *Evangeline*. Withal, *The Courtship of Miles Standish* is one of the most charming romantic tales in all poetry.

Tales of a Wayside Inn (1863) consists of a group of stories, either heard or read by Longfellow, arranged somewhat after the manner of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The tellers of these poetic tales are supposed to be gathered at an old inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts. Many of the characters represent the poet's friends in and about Boston. Longfellow's wide

reading in various national literatures is shown in the *Tales*. Among the more familiar poems included in the series are "Paul Revere's Ride," "King Robert of Sicily," and "The Birds of Killingworth."

Literary Characteristics and Contribution.—Simplicity, purity, tenderness, beauty,—these are the words that fitly characterize Longfellow's poetry as well as his life. In temperament he was an artist, and he accordingly had a delicate sense of beauty. His verse is full of gentle melody. The music of his lines often saves them from dreary commonplace. His culture was wide, and it permeates his writings as an aroma. His poetry lacks vigor, originality, and strength, but it has the homely household virtues. He is our great domestic poet, "the laureate of the common human heart," as he has been aptly called. And, indeed, it is no small achievement to have won the affection of the masses in this and other lands, where greater geniuses have failed. This popularity is not due to depth of thought, but to feeling and moral soundness joined with charm of style. Longfellow's poetry does not exalt, but it comforts, soothes, and heartens one for the common tasks of life.

Among the more specific contributions of Longfellow the following are specially noteworthy: (1) The bringing into American literature of extensive old-world culture. He spent a number of years in Europe and became intimately familiar with the rich and varied lore of many lands. These old legends he imported into his own, clothing them in pleasing verse. (2) He is the only American poet to write long narrative poems. *Evangeline*, *Hiawatha*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, are well sustained stories. (3) He is the first American poet to weave into a long narrative the principal Indian legends. *Hiawatha* is our American epic. (4) He has brought out with notable success the romance of Puritanism in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. (5) He is a great ballad-writer and sonnet-writer. The sonnets prefixed to his translation of Dante are

the most artistic in our literature. In general, it may be said that, despite his diffuseness and frequent commonplaceness, Longfellow is likely to continue to be the most widely read American poet.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819-1891)

His Life.—James Russell Lowell was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 22, 1819, at Elmwood, the comfortable three-story house in the large yard in the outskirts of the old university town. He came of an old New England family, whose name has for generations been prominent in commercial and professional life: his grandfather was a lawyer, his father a clergyman, one uncle gave its name to the city of Lowell and another founded the Lowell Institute in Boston. Lowell's mother was a woman of fine musical ability and imaginative temperament, and she used to read the boy to sleep from Spenser's *Fairie Queene*. Thus, like many another poet, Lowell early became acquainted with the mellifluous verse of this Elizabethan romancer. At Harvard, which he entered in 1834, he read, as he says, "almost everything except the textbooks prescribed by the faculty." Thus he became acquainted with the older English classics, some of the great Italian poets, particularly Dante, and with Montaigne among the older French writers. Indeed, he was a leader among the more intellectual youths, with whom in those days at Harvard the love of literature amounted to a passion. For his neglect of certain prescribed college duties Lowell was in his senior year "rusticated" at Concord, being allowed, however, to return in time for graduation; as he was not permitted to read his class poem, he distributed printed copies among his classmates. During this stay at Concord he came to know Emerson, with whom he walked and talked, without, however, accepting his transcendental ideas.

After taking his degree in 1838, Lowell entered the Harvard Law School, from which he graduated two years later. But law was not to his taste, and after remaining for a year or two in an office in Boston waiting in vain for clients, during which time he was reading and writing verse, he gave up the law and became editor of *The Pioneer*. This periodical had a brief career, but among the contributors to the three numbers which did appear were Hawthorne, Poe, Whittier, besides Lowell. When the magazine failed, Lowell went to New York, where he remained one winter. In 1843 he published a volume of poems and the next year a prose work on the older English poets. That same year (1844) he

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married Miss Maria White, to whom he had been engaged for some time; chiefly through her influence he became an ardent abolitionist.

After spending a few months in Philadelphia as an editorial writer on an anti-slavery paper, he returned to Cambridge and for the next six years lived quietly at Elmwood, writing poetry and reading widely in several literatures. In these years at home were begun some of the enduring friendships of his life; during this time, too, the first great sorrow of his life came in the loss of his little daughter Blanche. In 1851 he went to Europe, and remained for nearly a year in Italy. Mrs. Lowell died in 1853, and there passed out of his life the companionship of a gifted woman of lofty ideals. In 1854-'55 Lowell delivered a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute. The same year he was appointed to the Smith Professorship of Belles-Lettres at Harvard as successor to Longfellow, a position which he held, with the exception of an interval of two years in Europe, until 1877. Before entering upon his duties as college professor he spent another year abroad in study. At Harvard for over twenty years he gave courses in Italian, Spanish, and French literatures, and proved himself an inspiring teacher.

For four years (1857-'61) Lowell was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and from 1864 to 1872 of the *North American Review*. Of the *Atlantic Monthly*

he was the first editor, and to him and Holmes is due in large measure the distinctive literary character of that periodical. The years 1872-'74 he spent in Europe; honorary degrees were conferred upon him by the great English universities.

Lowell's diplomatic career began in 1877 when he was appointed Minister to Spain. Aside from his eminence as a man of letters, he had come into prominence politically through his attacks on certain corruptions in public life in the administrations following the Civil War and also through his selection as delegate to the Republican Convention and as presidential elector in 1876. His appointment as Minister to Spain revived the fine traditions of the days of Washington Irving. In 1880 he was transferred to England, where he represented his country until 1885. As Minister to England he was exceedingly popular; no public occasion seemed complete without a speech from him. No other American representative ever did so much to interpret America to our British cousins. Welcomed as "His Excellency the Ambassador of American Literature to the Court of Shakespeare," Lowell was more than a literary man; his firm administration of his office, his tactfulness, his democracy, and his social gifts, won the admiration of Englishmen and Americans.

Lowell returned to his dear Elmwood in 1885. Certain partisan and sensational newspapers, as usual, attacked his record as our representative abroad, accusing him of un-American manners and utterances. This provinicial patriotism sooner or later of course recoils upon the inventors' heads; all liberal-minded men know that Lowell was not only thoroughly democratic, but a gentleman and man of the world at the same time, and therefore a national interpreter in the best sense. His last days were spent in retirement in his ancestral home. The second Mrs. Lowell had died in England. His old friends Emerson and Longfellow were dead; Holmes remained, together with such younger men as Curtis, Norton, and Howells. In his library at Elmwood he was again joined to his poets and philosophers; in the elms he heard the robins welcome the springime as of yore and saw the dandelions dot the green with gold. He turned once more to the muses:

> Little I ask of Fate; will she refuse
> Some days of reconcilement with the Muse?
> I take my reed again and blow it free
> Of dusty silence, murmuring, "Sing to me!"

It is seldom given to a man to spend his life in the house in which he was born, but such was Lowell's happy lot. At Elmwood he died on

August 12, 1891, and was laid to rest in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, almost across the way, just below the ridge where Longfellow lies.

His Personality.—"He was fond of everything human and natural," says Henry James,[1] "everything that had color and character, and no gayety, no sense of comedy, was ever more easily kindled by contact. When he was not surrounded by great pleasures he could find his account in small ones." Lowell was an intensely vital man and therefore an interesting personality. Those who knew him speak of his perennial youth-

ELMWOOD
Lowell's Home, Cambridge, Mass.

fulness, his "robust and humorous optimism," his urbane and whimsical manner. He was the lovable companion, the incomparable talker. Whether as teacher, suggestively commenting in his serio-quizzical way on a passage in Dante, or as a host at Elmwood poking the fire and intimately chatting with a guest, or as diplomat exchanging felicities with British statesmen, or as literary orator dedicating memorials to poets,

[1]The *Century Magazine*, January, 1892.

he was ever the cultivated gentleman, the accomplished man of the world, whose immense range of knowledge and observation had not dulled his freshness of tone or chilled his enthusiasms.

Humorist and satirist though he was and of an irrepressible gayety when the mood was on, Lowell was nevertheless a man of great moral earnestness. In some of his best-known poems this trait appears as stern and uncompromising as it was in his ancestors; the Puritan conscience was in him, in spite of his modernness and his varied culture and his quizzical play of wit. There was deep within him, moreover, a childlike quality of sympathy which won people to him. It is said that once in London he was passing a building with the inscription, "Home for Incurable Children." After reading the sign, Lowell turned to his companion and remarked, with his whimsical smile: "Ah, they will take me there some day." These various and often contradictory elements of his personality may best be seen in his letters, which are among the most charming in American literature.

His Poetry.—From his boyhood Lowell had been a writer of verses, and at Harvard he freely exercised his talent. The early poems show the influence of Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, and Tennyson. Indeed, some of them are little more than clever imitations. The classical allusions reveal Lowell's extensive reading, while the echoes of older English poets prove how well acquainted he was with the Elizabethans. Most of the earlier verse is short and lyric in nature; there are some fine sonnets, personal tributes, and an occasional nature poem, though much of the nature poetry belongs to later years. Among these first productions are "Stanzas on Freedom," "The Shepherd of King Admetus," "O Moonlight deep and tender," "An Incident in a Railroad Car" (a tribute to Burns's influence on uncultured men), and "Rhoecus," the story of the youth who suffered for his scorn of nature.

The first notable poem of Lowell is "The Present Crisis" (1845), written when the annexation of Texas was being agitated. Believing that this would mean the extension of slavery he voiced his opposition in the ringing lines of this well-known poem. The application, however, is far more general, and certain stanzas continue to be quoted in reference to any crisis in which error seems for the time about to triumph over truth. Perhaps no other poem of Lowell has so often served public speakers in driving home a great moral lesson. The last stanza, beginning—

> Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
> In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side,—

and the final stanza, beginning—

> New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth;
> They must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast
> of truth,—

are the most familiar; but, in a broad comforting sense, this stanza is more striking:

> Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
> One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;
> Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.

The year 1848 was Lowell's *annus mirabilis:* in that year appeared three of his greatest poems—*The Fable for Critics, The Vision of Sir Launfal,* and the first series of *The Biglow Papers. The Fable for Critics* was written with headlong speed for the author's own amusement. Taking as a sort of framework the old classic fable of Apollo under the laurel tree, he rather whimsically introduces to the god a number of contemporary literary people. The salient characteristics of

each one are happily hit off. The estimates of Emerson, Bryant, Hawthorne, Cooper, Irving, Poe, and Holmes, are in the main those of posterity, and show that Lowell was a sympathetic critic of keen insight. The poem is in rhyming couplets, after the fashion of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, but without the bitterness of that stinging satire. *The Vision of Sir Launfal* is probably the most popular poem of Lowell now; this is due, no doubt, to the very obvious moral lesson which it carries. It is the triumph of charity over selfishness in the soul of the knight; suffering brings a feeling of sympathy and brotherhood. The plot is Lowell's own, and the rhapsody on June (his favorite month) and other nature-descriptions make the setting more artistic than the story itself. The poem has many quotable lines:

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

And what is so rare as a day in June?

Not what we give, but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare.

Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not.

The Biglow Papers is Lowell's most original production in verse. The first series was completed in 1845, and was begun as a satire on the Mexican War; the second series belongs to the Civil War period. The poems constituting *The Biglow Papers* are in the Yankee dialect, with which Lowell was remarkably familiar. The use of dialect was favorable to humor and satire as well as to great freedom of expression. Moreover, as a student of language, Lowell was interested in local peculiarities of speech, which he took the liberty of greatly exaggerating for humorous effect. The supposed

author of the papers is Hosea Biglow, a canny New England farmer. His comments are full of native common sense. Here are several epigrams:

> Don't never prophesy—onless ye know.
>
> A ginooine statesman should be on his guard,
> Ef he *must* hev beliefs, nut to b'lieve 'em too hard.
>
> Pleasure doos make us Yankees kind o'winch,
> Ez though 'twuz sunthin' paid for by the inch;
> But yit we du contrive to worry thru,
> Ef Dooty tells us thet the thing's to du.
>
> Democ'cacy gives every man
> The right to be his own oppressor.

In the first series of *The Biglow Papers*, protest is made against the extension of slavery to a new state, Texas; in the second series, a plea is made for its entire suppression. The first is more spontaneous, for in the second Lowell's interest in the linguistic phase of his subject made the schoolmaster too prominent. The satire is exceedingly clever, but shall we call it poetry? To-day, however loyal one may be to Lowell, one soon has enough of *The Biglow Papers*. As Professor Cairns remarks: "Lowell never knew when to stop fooling, once he had begun."

In the second series of *The Biglow Papers* there are two poems which merit special mention—"The Courtin'" and "Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line." "The Courtin'" is the best lyric of its kind in American verse; it is a little New England pastoral perfectly depicting a fireside scene, of which a coyly conscious maiden and a bashful youth are the center:

> He kin' o' litered on the mat,
> Some doubtfle o' the sekle,
> His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
> But hern went pity. Zekle.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?"
"Wal . . no . . I come dasignin'—"
"To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es
Agin to-morrow's inin."

To say why gals acts so or so,
Or don't, 'ould be persumin';
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*
Comes nateral to women.

But the poem is too familiar to need quotation; the twenty-four stanzas make a unity which should not be broken anyhow. "Suthin' in the Pastoral Line" is fresh with bits of nature-description.

The later poems of Lowell include the fine "Harvard Commemoration Ode," probably the best ode in American literature; "L'Envoi," which in sentiment belongs with such idealistic poems as Longfellow's "Excelsior," Emerson's "Forerunners," and Poe's "Eldorado"; "The Washers of the Shroud," one of Lowell's greatest; "Agassiz," an elegy on the eminent scientist; and "Under the Old Elm" (1875), read at the hundredth anniversary of Washington's taking command of the American troops under the old elm in Cambridge. The following lines form the conclusion of the "Commemoration Ode" and are in Lowell's best manner:

O Beautiful! my country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of thy smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!

Poetic Qualities.—Lowell is one of our finest nature poets; his feeling for nature, especially the gentler aspects, is delicate, one may almost say, dainty. "To the Dandelion," "dear common flower," is exquisite and heartfelt. He succeeded well with humorous verse and satire: there is nothing in American poetry just like the *Fable for Critics*, with its pungent and yet genial wit, and there is nothing in English or American poetry like *The Biglow Papers*. He is pre-eminently the poet of great occasions: patriotic celebrations, anniversaries of literary importance, political crises, found in Lowell a masterful and accomplished spokesman. His later verse has great dignity and distinction. He was able to coin portable and inspiring phrases, particularly for youth; as, for instance, his well-known line in "For an Autograph":

> Greatly begin! though thou have time
> But for a line, be that sublime,—
> Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

His limitations are evident enough to the thoughtful reader: prosaic lines now and then lower the warmth and weaken the tone of his verse; his Elizabethan fondness for punning sometimes spoils an artistic effect; his lack of concreteness often leaves a vague impression, a defect doubtless due to his academic temper. His later poetry tends to become involved and abstract.

His Prose.—Four volumes contain the best of Lowell's prose work: *Among My Books* (1870), *My Study Windows* (1871), *Among My Books, Second Series* (1876), and *Democracy and Other Addresses* (1886). Some of these essays originally appeared in the two great magazines of which he was at different times the editor, some are addresses delivered in England and at home. They cover a wide range—Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Keats, Wordsworth, Lessing, Rousseau, Carlyle, "My Garden

Acquaintance," "A Good Word for Winter," "On A Certain Condescension in Foreigners," "Democracy."

The first thing that impresses the reader of Lowell's essays is the immense fund of his ready information. His allusions are almost as numerous and bewildering as Macaulay's. His literary essays are generally on individuals, but one is more interested in the man who is treating them—in his fresh, inspiring enthusiasm,—than in the subjects dicussed. Lowell pours out for you his varied knowledge in endless profusion, illuminating it with happy turns of thought, flashes of wit, and scattering over his pages with prodigal carelessness jewels or flowers gathered from a thousand fields. On his subject his rich fancy plays until you see it as he sees it. That is what he wishes you to do. He is not methodic; sometimes he seems pedantic; again he is full of caprice, and keeps you guessing as to what he may say next. If he cannot find a word to suit him, he unhesitatingly coins one, and you will understand it if perchance you are well versed in literatures and languages, but you will hardly find it in the dictionary. In any case, he will stimulate you to read more; his tricksy turns of phrase, his brilliant epigrams, even his puns, will amuse you, stir your imagination, or make you think. No other American critic has been able to talk more brilliantly and intimately on apparently threadbare literary subjects.

Like Matthew Arnold, Lowell used the comparative and appreciative method in literary criticism; his wide reading and trustworthy memory enabled him to draw on several literatures for illustrations and to quote apposite sayings from any given writer. His essay on Dante, for instance, though too long for most readers, is better than a formal treatise for any one who really wants to catch the spirit of Dante. The essay on Chaucer gives an insight into that poet which more scholastic and more technically exact dissertations do not furnish. Indeed, one might begin with this essay, as has been suggested, and by reading in order the other poets discussed by

Lowell down to Wordsworth, gain a respectable knowledge of the development of English poetry from the Renaissance to modern times. He who appreciatively reads Lowell's essays might be said to be liberally educated. They are not particularly easy reading, for they demand intelligent concentration and presuppose culture, but they are so bright and so human withal that they abundantly repay the effort they at first cost. A few quotations from the essays will illustrate, though inadequately, Lowell's way of saying things:

With Dante the main question is the saving of the soul, with Chaucer it is the conduct of life.

The young demand thoughts that find an echo in their real and not their acquired nature, and care very little about the dress they are put in. It is later that we learn to like the conventional, as we do olives.

The aim of the artist is psychologic, not historic truth.

Talent is that which is in a man's power; genius is that in whose power a man is.

The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinion.

Lowell was one of the most patriotic of men, as his notable address on "Democracy," delivered in Birmingham, England, in 1884, shows. This speech gave to Englishmen a clearer conception of American democracy than any other discussion of that subject they had heard or read. It has, in truth, become a classic utterance, which every American should read. Its dominant note is idealistic and optimistic; the following sentence expresses a fundamental sentiment in his political creed: "I believe that the real will never find an irremovable basis until it rests on the ideal." Out of the basal moral element in his character sprang the nobility of his own ideals.

General Estimate.—Lowell is the most versatile of American literary men. He was editor, teacher, diplomat, reformer, public speaker, poet, and essayist; in all these activities he

acquitted nimself with credit, in most of them with rare distinction. That he did so many things well may have kept him from being supremely great in any one thing. He knew a great deal and had a remarkable facility of expression; he is the most broadly cultured of our writers. In the field of literary criticism, only one other among our standard authors can justly be named along with him, and that is Edgar Allan Poe; and Lowell was better equipped than Poe. Like Poe, too, he succeeded equally well in both poetry and prose, but he lacks the genius of Poe. With his extraordinary gifts and his almost universal culture, Lowell somehow just missed being a genius. He had not the patience necessary to the most enduring fruits of genius; he wrought too rapidly, and he failed to use the file; revision and suppression would have helped. But when all is said, the impressive fact remains that Lowell is our best rounded literary man.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894)

His Life.—Oliver Wendell Holmes came of a long line of distinguished ancestry, among whom were the Phillipses, the Wendells, the Hancocks, the Quincys, and the Bradstreets. From Anne Bradstreet, the first American poetess, he was directly descended. These names are prominent in the political, religious, and literary history of Massachusetts. Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 29, 1809, birthyear of half a dozen noted men. The house of his father, pastor of the First Church, stood near the Harvard yard—"the house with the gambrel roof," mentioned frequently in Holmes's writings. Young Holmes was educated at Phillips Andover Academy and at Harvard, from which he graduated in the famous class of '29, so often celebrated by him in verse. At the Harvard Law School he studied a year, then turned to medicine, carrying on his studies two years abroad, mostly in Paris, and graduating at the Harvard Medical School in 1836. During the next four years he was occasionally composing poetry, writing on medical subjects, and lecturing for a while at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. In 1840 he began to practice medicine in Boston; that same year he married Miss Amelia Lee Jackson. In 1847 he became Professor of Anatomy and Physiology at the Harvard Medical School, and held this position as active and emeritus professor until his death forty-seven years later.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

In 1857 the *Atlantic Monthly* was established, with James Russell Lowell as its first editor. This position was accepted by Lowell on condition that Holmes, who had named the new magazine, should be a regular contributor. In the first number he accordingly began his well-known "Breakfast Table" series. Lowell remarked later in his characteristic vein: "You see the Doctor is like a bright mountain stream that has been dammed up among the hills, and is waiting for an outlet into the Atlantic." To Holmes, in truth, this great periodical owes much in the formation of that high literary character which has always distinguished it. From this time on Holmes became more distinctly a man of letters, though his regular profession did not suffer through his interest in literature. Many of his best poems were written in the twenty years following his first connection with the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857; some of the most familiar of these first appeared in the contributions later published as the "Breakfast Table" volumes. Of the poems independently issued, those on his class reunions—annually celebrated in verse for thirty-nine years—form a notable series.

The years passed uneventfully for the genial Autocrat, varied by occasional trips to Europe. Academic honors came to him at home and abroad. When he appeared on the platform at Oxford to receive his D. C. L. from the old English University, the students in the gallery called out: "Did he come in the 'One-Hoss Shay'?" At three-score years and ten he said he was "seventy years young." He outlived all the other New England poets, dying on October 7, 1894. He is buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, not far from Longfellow and Lowell.

His Personality.—Oliver Wendell Holmes was a representative New Englander of the cultured class. He was to the manner born, and this will account for his somewhat aristocratic and conservative leanings. He liked the best in the old, but he was nevertheless eager to keep abreast of the new. Mental alertness and ingenuity are evident characteristics; these appear in his interest in all sorts of people and things and in his inventiveness. He liked to experiment with various mechanical devices, such as the microscope, the camera, and the safety razor; he actually invented the small hand-stereoscope. His versatility was great. He was fond of dabbling in psychology; questions of heredity specially interested him.

Personally Holmes was a genial, cheery, buoyant soul, with an optimistic outlook on life and a philosopher's insight into human nature. The boy never died in him; the joy of living, the love of fun, delight in queer things, he never lost. His humor was kindly, sometimes shading into pathos, and his wit was keen. So genial was he, so companionable, so human, that his sharp sayings did not hurt. He was probably the best talker and the most delightful dinner-guest of his time in Boston. But, humorist though he was, there was in him, as in all real humorists, a deep inner seriousness: "Outside I laugh," he once remarked, "inside I never laugh. It is impossible. The world is too sad."

His Poetry.—Throughout his life literature was with Holmes an important avocation, a relief from his exacting duties as

lecturer and writer on medicine. He began writing poetry as a college boy, and when he was twenty-one his first important poem was published in the *Daily Advertiser* of Boston. This was "Old Ironsides," a ringing protest against the proposed destruction of the old frigate Constitution, which had done valiant service in the War of 1812. The authorities at Washington were soon impressed by the wave of popular indignation at the order to demolish the unseaworthy old boat, and countermanded it. Thus, for at least once in history, a lyric poem by

BIRTHPLACE OF HOLMES
Cambridge, Mass.

a college boy changed a government order. "Old Ironsides" is a serious enough poem, but most of Holmes's other early verse—that written between 1830 and 1848—is humorous.

The best-known poem of these years, and, indeed, one of the famous lyrics in American literature, is "The Last Leaf" (1832), a "unique compound of humor and pathos," as Whittier said. Lincoln thought the little poem "inexpressibly touching," and Edgar Allan Poe liked it well enough to make a careful copy of it. The figure of Major Thomas Melville, well known in Boston as "the last of the cocked hats," was the original of

that described in the poem. "His aspect," says Holmes "among the crowds of a later generation reminded me of a withered leaf which has held to its stem through the storms of autumn and winter, and finds itself still clinging to its bough while the new growths of spring are bursting their buds and spreading their foliage all around it." One stanza in particular is often quoted as an example of the perfect harmony of sense and sound—pathetic suggestion in a minor key:

> The mossy marbles rest
> On the lips that he has pressed
> In their bloom,
> And the names he loved to hear
> Have been carved for many a year
> On the tomb.

After Holmes began his "Breakfast Table" series in 1857, many of his poems appeared for the first time in one of those entertaining papers. Among these are "The Chambered Nautilus" and the "One-Hoss Shay," one serious and one humorous. Few stanzas in our poetry are more often quoted than the concluding lines of "The Chambered Nautilus":

> Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll!
> Leave thy low-vaulted past!
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free,
> Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

The poem was "suggested by looking at a section of one of those chambered shells to which is given the name Pearly Nautilus." This is a poem which every youth would do well to commit to memory.

Three other serious poems deserve special mention: "The Voiceless," "Under the Violets," and "Dorothy Q." The

first is in honor of silent poets, of whom there are very many in the world,—

> Those that never sing,
> But die with all their music in them.

"Under the Violets" is a lyric, worthy of the English poets, Collins and Gray, on the resting place of a young girl:

> If any, born of kindlier blood,
> Should ask, What maiden lies below?
> Say only this: A tender bud,
> That tried to blossom in the snow,
> Lies withered where the violets blow.

"Dorothy Q" is one of those poems in which Holmes shows his pride in his ancestry, an exquisite tribute to Dorothy Quincy, inspired by her portrait.

During the war Holmes wrote a few patriotic poems, the drift of which is a plea for a restored union. There is no bitterness in these, for the author was too liberal in spirit for caustic speech, but they breathe an ardent wish for an unbroken sisterhood of states. The best of these war poems are "Brother Jonathan to Sister Caroline" (South Carolina), "Union and Liberty," and "Voyage of the Good Ship Union."

The class-reunion poems hold a unique place in American verse. Every year from 1851 to 1889 Holmes brought a poem to the annual meeting of his college class (the "famous class of '29"). These productions are distinctly typical of their author, revealing not only his loyalty to his Alma Mater and his classmates but also his love of country and his devotion to Boston and Cambridge. Noteworthy among these pieces are "The Boys" (1859), "Bill and Joe" (1868), "The Shadows" (1880), and "After the Curfew" (1889). In this connection should be mentioned Holmes's tributes to his fellow-poets in the Cambridge group and to Whittier, all of whom he survived—"the last leaf upon the tree." One by one the members of the

"Saturday Club," that distinguished coterie of congenial spirits in Boston, passed into the shadows, and Holmes was left, the last of the immortals.

An account of Holmes's verse would be incomplete without at least a passing reference to his great vesper hymn, which he named "A Sun-Day Hymn" the first and last stanzas of which are:

Lord of all being! throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!
. . . . . .
Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

Poetic Qualities.—The word "social" fairly describes the most characteristic of Holmes's verses. He had a deep and engaging social instinct. Many of his pieces are what is technically known as "familiar verse" (*vers de société*, as the French call it). In form and spirit his poetry is conservative, suggesting his attachment to the seventeenth and eighteenth century English poets. Some lines remind one of the "Cavalier poets," others are reminiscent of Pope or Collins or Gray. His wit and humor are sparkling and crisp. He has almost succeeded in making humorous verse great poetry; and when he has blended pathos and humor, he has succeeded still better. He does not delve very deep nor fly very high, preferring to skim with level wing the surface of life; but now and then he sounds the depths of friendship and patriotism.

More specifically Holmes is the poet of Boston. Others may sing of New England in general or in spots; with Holmes, Boston is the spot.[1] He is, moreover, the ready poet of

[1] His opinion is thus expressed in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table:* "Boston State House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn't pry that out of a Boston man if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar."

social occasions: his verses on class reunions and other personal celebrations entitle him to be called a great occasional poet. He is, therefore, a notable singer of friendship and loyalty in graceful, tuneful, witty verse, in which the head never triumphs at the expense of the heart.

His Prose.—The prose works of Holmes, aside from his medical writings, consist of the "Breakfast Table" series and other personal narrative-talks, three novels, and two biographies.

The famous "Breakfast Table" series consists of three volumes—*The Autocrat, The Professor,* and *The Poet. The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1857) is a loose, personal essay-narrative on the sayings and doings at an imaginary boarding-house breakfast table in Boston. The work is mostly a conversational monologue by the Autocrat himself, with just enough talk by the other boarders to give an air of naturalness to the scene. The Autocrat discourses in an entertaining vein on all sorts of subjects—mutual admiration societies, genius, the essentials of good conversation, specialists, puns, poetry, old age, theology. Excellent short poems vary the monotony, and a little love story helps to give unity to the book. You may dip into it anywhere and find something to interest and instruct you. It is full of wise comment and sparkling epigram. Here, for instance, are several sentences chosen at random:

> Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.

> Controversy equalizes fools and wise men in the same way,—*and the fools know it.*

> Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection.

> It is by little things that we know ourselves; a soul would very probably mistake itself for another, when once disembodied, were it not

for individual experiences which differ from those of others only in details seemingly trifling.

The clergy rarely hear any sermons except what they preach themselves. A dull preacher might be conceived, therefore, to lapse into a state of *quasi* heathenism, simply for want of religious instruction.

The Autocrat contains Holmes's best talk. Many of the striking sayings had no doubt been actually used by him at Boston dinner tables. In the two succeeding books, *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1859) and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1872), the good talk goes on, but with less spontaneity and variety than in the first volume. "The first pressing of the grapes," as he called it, naturally resulted in a more sparkling effect. *The Professor* is a little heavy and didactic, but *The Poet*, written twelve years later, shows more of the pleasing qualities of the earliest work. Holmes was forty-eight when he contributed *The Autocrat* papers to the *Atlantic Monthly* and found a new outlet for his genius; he was over eighty when *Over the Tea Cups* was finished. These evening talks, which also appeared in the *Atlantic*, are cheerful and kindly, spiced with wit and mellowed with the wisdom that wide experience and enduring friendships had brought. Despite their reminiscent and subdued tone, however, they reveal Holmes's keen interest in new problems. It was simply impossible for him to grow old mentally.

While Holmes's reputation as a prose writer depends upon the "Breakfast Table" series, passing mention must be made of the three novels—*Elsie Venner*, *The Guardian Angel*, and *A Mortal Antipathy*. These stories are concerned with questions of heredity and moral responsibility. Elsie Venner's mother was bitten by a rattlesnake before the child's birth, and the daughter shows the effects of it in a strange, non-human element in her nature. In *The Guardian Angel* the power of certain hereditary tendencies is traced. Miles Gridley in this book is the most attractive of Holmes's charac-

ters. *A Mortal Antipathy* is the story of the rescue of a young man, ill with typhoid fever, from a burning building by an athletic college girl and the curing in him of a long and deep-seated aversion to her sex. The first two novels are the best, though neither is a great book. So permeated with medical knowledge are these three novels, that a friend of the author aptly called them "medicated fiction."

Holmes wrote a memoir of the historian, John Lothrop Motley, and a biography of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Both were his friends and are treated in a sympathetic and charming manner, though Holmes was temperamently unable to understand the transcendental side of Emerson's nature.

It is likely that posterity will think of Holmes as the author of a handful of clever poems and of one exceedingly readable prose work, *The Autocrat.* There is nothing else in American literature just like that delightful, chatty book. It suggests Sterne's *Tristram Shandy,* Lamb's *Essays of Elia,* and Christopher North's *Noctes Ambrosianae,* but it is different from all these English classics. The "Breakfast Table" series has a flavor all its own. It is an original contribution to literature. In this pellucid prose a genial, witty, richly cultured gentleman of infallible taste and kindly human heart perfectly revealed himself to his fellowmen.

THE HISTORIANS AND THE ORATORS

History and oratory belong to literature when, by reason of the artistic style and pleasing personality of writer and speaker, they make a permanent appeal to the imagination and the emotions. Much historical writing has no literary quality; facts are set forth in a dry way, scientifically accurate but without illuminating grace or dramatic effect. The main things to be desired in a history are, of course, accuracy and clearness of statement, based on painstaking investigation. Now and then, however, a man of literary sensibility, with a

genius for graphic narration and description, writes history with such brilliancy and intensity that in addition to its scientific value it possesses literary merit. We find this combination, for instance, in Gibbon, the English historian; and also in Macaulay and Carlyle, though the one is sometimes over brilliant and the other over dramatic. The New England historians of literary interest are Prescott, Bancroft, Motley, Parkman, and Fiske.

Most public speeches perish after the causes which they advocate have triumphed or failed; they are not interesting to newer generations. Occasionally, however, a speaker deals in so vital and artistic a manner with some fundamental principle in the life of a nation, such as liberty or love of country, that what he says makes a permanent appeal to the hearts of men. Such a speech becomes a part of literature. Among the New England orators of this period only one is universally recognized as a great classic, and that is Daniel Webster; others, still famous but of lessening renown, are Choate, Sumner, Everett, and Phillips. We may now rapidly consider the principal New England historians and orators.

The Historians

George Bancroft (1800-1891).—George Bancroft was born at Worcester, Massachusetts, educated at Harvard, from which he graduated in 1817, and at the University of Goettingen, Germany, from which he received the degree of doctor of philosophy in 1820. After tutoring in Greek a year at Harvard, he helped to found a school at Northampton, and while teaching there published a small volume of poems. Later on, he held several official positions, serving as Secretary of the Navy under President Polk and as minister to England and to Germany. From 1849 to his death in 1891 his home was in New York.

In 1834 Bancroft published the first volume of his monumental *History of the United States*. To the completion of this

great work he devoted the best energies of his life for fifty years. It is in twelve volumes, covering the history of the country from the discovery of America to the adoption of the Constitution in 1788. Seven volumes are given to the American Revolution, and the last two to the formation of the Constitution. Bancroft was a painstaking investigator and a lucid writer, but his fondness for digressions and his almost excessive patriotism sometimes break the unity and injure the perspective of his work. Moreover, his style, particularly in the earlier volumes, is somewhat inflated; this defect, which is less noticeable in the latter part, was due to his desire to adapt his language to the stateliness of his theme. His history is a monument to American scholarship. Bancroft was a pioneer in that newer, scientific historical method in which Jared Sparks, Professor of History in Harvard College from 1839 to 1849, led the way. Sparks was really the founder in America of the modern historical school.

William H. Prescott (1796-1859).—William Hickling Prescott was born in Salem, Massachusetts, and educated at Harvard. While in college he lost the sight of one eye from an accident (he was struck by a piece of bread thrown by a fellow student at table), and was threatened with total blindness. In spite of the handicap of such an affliction, he decided to devote his life to historical writing. Fortunately, he was independent financially and could, therefore, employ copyists to visit the countries whose history he wished to write, and make records of important documents. These were generally read to him, for he could use his eyes in reading only a little while at a time, and with the help of his secretary he wrote out his few pages daily. He worked in a darkened room, used an instrument called a noctograph to guide his hand over the paper, and by careful diet and exercise conserved his strength in order that what little eyesight he had left might not be lost. His patient labor at his task under such an infirmity is, in the light of his great achievement, one of the heroisms of literature.

Prescott's first work, *The History of Ferdinand and Isabella,* came out in 1837; it had been preceded by years of labor in mastering the Spanish language and the immense number of documents necessary to the full understanding of the subject. On each work, indeed, Prescott toiled in the same slow and painful way. *The Conquest of Mexico* followed in six years, and in 1847 *The Conquest of Peru* was published. At the time of his death in 1859 Prescott had completed three of the four projected volumes of what he regarded as his greatest work, *The History of Philip II.* He was a pioneer in the romantic field of Spanish conquest in America, a part of the background of which Irving had rapidly explored, and the subject was fresh and fascinating to readers. But more fascinating than the facts is Prescott's style; the new books read like novels, so vivid and even gorgeous is the description, so graphic is the narrative. They were written with extreme care, and if they are not scientifically accurate, it is more the fault of the old chroniclers than of their laborious interpreter whose histories have at any rate made that vanished time live again in the imagination.

John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877).—John Lothrop Motley was born near Boston, and educated at Harvard and the universities of Berlin and Goettingen. He had prepared for college at Bancroft's school at Northampton, and there felt the stimulating influence of that rising young historian. After his return from Germany, Motley studied law for a while, wrote a novel, and in 1841 entered upon a diplomatic career, from which he, however, soon withdrew. Between 1861 and 1870 he was minister to Austria and to England, but was recalled from England because of a political feud at Washington. Before his residence in Europe as American minister he had spent several years abroad, studying manuscript collections in preparation for his ambitious program of historical writing. *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* appeared in 1856, and *The*

United Netherlands was completed in 1868. His last book was the *Life of John of Barneveldt.*

Motley was a diligent student of historical sources, in the examination of which he spent much time and money. He planned an exhaustive account of the struggle for liberty in the Netherlands, covering a period of eighty years and ending in a climax with the Thirty Years' War. He succeeded in making the history of those stirring times as interesting as a novel and as lively as a play. He had already written two novels and his dramatic ability was pronounced; indeed, as a young man he had acted in amateur theatricals and had written plays. His was a brilliant mind and a fertile fancy, and to this was added a gift for pleading a cause eloquently and effectively. He was, therefore, something of an advocate, and he argues for the Dutch Protestants so sympathetically as to invite the charge of partisanship. Still, he is in the main an authentic historian, and his works have high literary quality. Like Macaulay, he is able to characterize historical personages in such a clear-cut way that they seem alive. Like Carlyle, he always found a hero around whom to weave the tissues of history.

FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823-1893)

His Life.—Francis Parkman was born in Boston in 1823. As a boy he spent much time at his grandfather's place, eight miles from that city, on the border of a great forest of four thousand acres; in this he wandered at will and learned the habits of wild animals and the nature of rocks and plants and trees. Thus, he early began the study of outdoor life, which was later to stand him in good stead in writing history. While a student at Harvard he made trips in the summer to the northern woods and there continued his open-air studies; he literally became "enamoured of the woods." He went to Europe and spent several weeks in a monastery at Rome in order that he might more intimately know the habits of monks, for even then he was planning a history of the Jesuit settlements in America. After graduation in 1844, he studied law the better to understand the constitutional questions involved in the subject on which he had chosen to write.

In 1846 Parkman went far west into the howling wilderness along the "Oregon trail," intent on learning at first hand the life of the Indians. Into one of the wildest tribes of the Sioux he managed through a government agent in St. Louis to gain an entrance; his desire was to live with them, undergo the hardships of camp and journeys, and thus from the inside thoroughly to familiarize himself with Indian habits. For this rough experience he had prepared himself by strenuous exercise in the gymnasium, long walks, and training under a circus manager; but the weeks in the Indian tribe seriously undermined his constitution and injured his already weak eyesight. He says he rode for weeks over the Black Hills "reeling in the saddle with weakness and pain"; he ate with the Indians, slept with the Indians, hunted with them, danced with them, made himself one of them. When he returned to civilization, his sight was almost gone and his nervous system was all but a wreck. This is the price he paid for knowledge, but it enabled him to write on Indian character with a sureness such as no man since has possessed. He really saw the last of the primitive American Indian. "The wild cavalcade," said he afterwards, "that defiled with me down the gorges of the Black Hills, with its paint and war plumes, fluttering trophies and savage embroidery, bows, arrows, lances, and shields, will never be seen again."

FRANCIS PARKMAN

He went back home and began work upon his books, publishing two within the five years following his return. For long periods he was compelled from weakness and blindness to rest from his task, and by way of diversion he turned to the cultivation of roses, in which he became so expert that he was appointed Professor of Horticulture in Harvard University, a position he held for a year or two. He also wrote a book on rose-culture. In the preparation of his historical works, to which he returned when his health had improved, he found it necessary to make five trips to Europe to examine documents, so great was his passion for

accuracy. And during all this time he labored under hardships that would have reduced most men to a state of passive invalidism. He could seldom work more than half an hour at a time, nor could he listen to a reader longer than that without acute nervous suffering; rarely could he read more than five consecutive minutes; he could scarcely see, and such writing as he did was done with closed eyes. For one whole half-year "the rate of composition on his history averaged six lines a day." And yet he went on until twelve volumes were in print as a monument to his unconquerable will. "The heroism," says Fiske, "shown year after year in contending with physical ailments was the index of a character fit to be mated, for its pertinacious courage, with the heroes that live in his shining pages." Cheerfulness and courage marked his life. He died in 1893, and was buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

His Works.—The general subject of Parkman's histories is the struggle between France and England for supremacy in the New World. Before taking up the theme proper he published in 1849 *The California and Oregon Trail*, a thrilling account of his personal adventures in the West three years previous, which had first appeared in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*. In 1851 his first historical work was published, *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*, though this is properly the last of the series, if the order of events described should be chronologically observed. Arranged in that order, the histories are: *Pioneers of France in the New World* (1865); *The Jesuits in North America* (1867); *La Salle, or the Discovery of the Great West* (1869); *The Old Régime in Canada* (1874); *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV* (1877); *A Half-Century of Conflict* (1892); *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884); *The Conspiracy of Pontiac*. These works fill twelve volumes and make a complete and authentic record of that critical period of American history centering about the French and Indian War.

As already indicated, these works are based on painstaking research. Parkman visited the places he describes and minutely examined original documents. In the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society are nearly two hundred folio volumes of material which expert copyists gathered at home and abroad

under the historian's direction; this illustrates Parkman's passion for truth. But he knew that more was necessary than a study of documents; to make the past really live for the reader, he who interprets it should be, so Parkman thought, something of a naturalist. He accordingly made himself thoroughly acquainted with the setting of his events—the natural history of the region as well as the political. The result is a picturesqueness and a realism so great that he seems to have written his books amid the scenes they describe, a veritable witness of the happenings. His pages "fairly reek with the fragrance of the pine woods."

Parkman's style has high literary charm. It is simple, lucid, plain or colored to harmonize with the theme, rapid or slow as the natural movement demands. One is not conscious of any unusual merit in it, so perfect a vehicle of the thought is it, so borne along is one by the procession of vital forces. There is no philosophizing, but there is rapid analysis of cause and effect, all in the narrative manner that makes the reader feel that he is getting along. The two works best known to the general reader and most easily accessible are *The Oregon Trail* and *The Conspiracy of Pontiac.* These every youth should read. They are as full of thrilling adventure, of live Indians and fights, of woods and breezy plains, as a Western romance, and, what is a good deal better than a mere story, they are true and their English is a joy to the sensitive soul. In Parkman is found the rare union of perfect literary grace and historical accuracy.

John Fiske (1842-1901).—John Fiske, the latest of the New England historians, was born in Hartford, Connecticut, educated at Harvard, studied law, was for several years instructor in history and assistant librarian at Harvard, and then lecturer on history in Washington University, St. Louis, though residing in Cambridge. He became interested in philosophy and wrote a number of books interpreting to the general reader the doctrine of evolution in its philosophical aspects. About

1885 he began his writing on historical themes, and between 1888 and his death in 1901 he published something like a dozen volumes on the history of the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. Among his best-known historical works are *A Critical Period of American History*, *The Beginnings of New England*, and *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors*. Fiske is notable for his clear and forceful style and for his ability to interpret history and philosophy to the popular mind without loss of substantial accuracy.

The Orators

Wendell Phillips (1811-1884).—The group of abolitionist orators is best represented by its most illustrious member, Wendell Phillips, descendant of an old and aristocratic Massachusetts family. He was educated at Harvard, studied law, but virtually gave up that profession to devote his energies to the anti-slavery cause, realizing that his attachment to that unpopular movement would mean the alienation of prospective clients. His first famous speech was made in Faneuil Hall, Boston, in 1837, in which he made a dramatic reply to a state official who had just defended the mobbing of an abolitionist editor in Illinois. From that time Phillips became an aggressive spokesman for the reformers. He had great moral and physical courage, a commanding presence, a pleasing voice, a remarkable memory, and is said to have been able to sway his audience at will. His judgment was often at fault, his prejudicies were strong, his temper was often bad, but so forceful was his personality, so resistless his eloquence, that his hearers would not infrequently assent at the moment to statements he made, which, after cool reflection, they would utterly repudiate. This was true in the case of his Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard in 1881, "The Scholar in a Republic,"—the oration which is now usually included in collections of classic American speeches—in which he excoriated the listening Cambridge scholars for their aloofness from politics. His speeches

bristle with historical and literary allusions, and it would be an evidence of a liberal education in the reader who could without special effort correctly locate them. As a lyceum orator Phillips was in great demand in the latter part of his life, and his oration on "The Lost Arts" is the most celebrated of his lyceum lectures.

DANIEL WEBSTER (1782-1852)

His Life.—Daniel Webster, one of the world's great orators, was born at Salisbury, New Hampshire, January 18, 1782, the son of a farmer. He was delicate and shy as a child, but showed at an early age remarkable mental powers. The neighborhood farmers used to induce the boy to read or recite passages from the Bible and the poets, for they loved to hear his musical voice and watch the light in his wonderful eyes. At Dartmouth College, where he graduated in 1801, he was recognized by the faculty as unusually gifted; he was a voracious reader and such an effective speaker—though before he went to college he had been too timid to declaim at school—that the citizens of the little college town invited him to deliver a Fourth-of-July oration. He taught for a while after leaving college and then studied law; he practised first at Portsmouth and later removed to Boston. Meanwhile, he was elected to Congress and served two terms. His reputation as an orator and lawyer was greatly increased by his winning of the celebrated "Dartmouth College Case" before the Supreme Court at Washington in 1818. The simple eloquence of the concluding sentences of that speech, uttered with deep feeling, brought tears to the eyes of Chief Justice Marshall: "It is, sir, as I have said, a small college. And yet there are those who love it."

DANIEL WEBSTER

Webster entered the United States Senate in 1827. The rest of his life was given to the public service either as senator or as Secretary of State; the latter office he twice filled. His failure to become President was the one great disappointment of his life and embittered his later years. The zenith of Webster's career was reached in 1830 when he made his famous "Reply to Hayne" in the Senate. This speech was an elaborate defense of the Constitution and a powerful plea for the preservation of the union. The last notable speech of Webster was in the Senate on March 7, 1850, in which he favored certain compromise measures on slavery. This brought on him a tempest of hostile criticism in the North, from the effects of which his reputation in that part of the country never wholly recovered. His last days were spent at Marshfield, his Massachusetts home, where on October 24, 1852, he passed away with these words on his lips: "I shall live." He is buried in the little graveyard there.

His Personality.—Daniel Webster possessed the most impressive personality in the history of oratory, according to contemporary accounts of his appearance and manners. The word "giant" was often applied to him, and yet he was only five feet and ten inches in height and weighed slightly less than two hundred pounds. It was, then, not mere size that so impressed people, though he was built on a grand scale. It was the totality of effect on the beholder—the big head, the marvelous eyes under the broad and lofty brow, the finely cut features full of massive strength, the stately carriage. In the streets of Liverpool the English sailor pointed at him and exclaimed, "There goes a king"; and Sidney Smith cried out when he first saw him, "Good heavens! he is a small cathedral by himself." He had a great personal presence. And then what a voice! "It was low and musical in conversation, in debate it was high but full, ringing out in moments of excitement like a clarion, and then sinking to deep notes with the solemn richness of organ-tones, while the words were accompanied by a manner in which grace and dignity mingled in complete accord. . . . There is no man in all history who came into the world so equipped physically for speech."[1]

[1] Henry Cabot Lodge: *Life of Daniel Webster*, p. 192.

The very faults of the man seem to have grown out of the bigness of his personality. As there was a largeness of manner, so there was a lavishness in living and a prodigality in spending. He was more or less in debt all his life, and men would lend to him as if the act were a favor conferred upon themselves. Webster was not over-scrupulous about paying these debts: his colossal nature, sensitive to the larger aspects of things, was somewhat insensitive to minor moral obligations. Once in his boyhood he and his older brother went to a neighboring fair, provided with a little money from the slender paternal store. When they returned, their mother asked Daniel what he did with his money. "Spent it," he cheerfully replied. "And what did you do with yours?" she asked, turning to the older brother. "Lent it to Daniel," he promptly answered. So it was through life. People extravagantly admired Daniel and showered gifts upon him, which he received in the royal way—a king taking largess from his loyal subjects.

His Orations.—The orations of Webster fall into three classes —(1) **Occasional Speeches,** commemorating famous national events and the lives of eminent men; (2) **Congressional Speeches,** delivered in the Senate on political themes; and (3) **Jury Addresses,** or pleas at the bar. Of the first class the most notable are the "First Bunker Hill Oration," delivered at the laying of the cornerstone of the Bunker Hill monument on June 17, 1825, and the eulogy on Adams and Jefferson (1826). In the "First Bunker Hill Oration," which Webster carefully wrote out, the introduction dwells briefly on the impressiveness of the occasion and its patriotic memories; the main body is a discussion of the changes in America and Europe since the Revolution, followed by an address to the survivors of the war, a tribute to the dead and to La Fayette, remarks on the advancement of popular government in the world, and the influence of America's example; the conclusion inculcates the duty of America to preserve what the fathers won and to "cultivate a true spirit of union and harmony." The "Second Bunker Hill

Oration" was delivered in 1843, when the monument was completed.

The greatest of the congressional speeches and, all things considered, the greatest of all his orations, is the "Reply to Hayne." This, as already stated, was delivered in the United States Senate in 1830, as an answer to the "state's rights" speech of Senator Hayne of South Carolina, in which the Southern statesman defended the right of a state to nullify the Constitution. The famous concluding words of Webster's speech—"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable,"—form the gist of his own political creed. Another well-known effort of Webster is the "Seventh of March Speech" (1850), approving Henry Clay's compromise measures on the slavery question including the "Fugitive Slave Law," so odious to the abolitionists.

The best of the jury addresses is that delivered at the trial of the murderers of Joseph White in Salem in 1830 and known as the "White Murder Case." As an example of Webster's strong and solemn diction, the closing paragraph of that speech may be quoted. He has argued the case at length and he now appeals to the members of the jury to do their duty:

> With consciences satisfied with the discharge of duty, no consequences can harm you. There is no evil that we cannot face or fly from but the consciousness of duty disregarded. A sense of duty pursues us ever. It is omnipresent like the Deity. If we take to ourselves the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, duty performed, or duty violated, is still with us, for our happiness or our misery. If we say the darkness shall hide us, in the darkness as in the light our obligations are yet with us. We cannot escape their power nor fly from their presence. They are with us in this life, will be with us at its close; and in that scene of inconceivable solemnity, which lies yet farther onward, we shall still find ourselves surrounded by the consciousness of duty, to pain us wherever it has been violated, and to console us so far as God may have given us grace to perform it.

Webster's style is like the man, stately and majestic. In early life, as with most young orators, he loved the big word, but he deliberately set himself the task of simplifying his

diction, weeding out the Latin polysyllables wherever he could, and so attained a stronger, more vital style. Still, it remained the "grand style," modeled after the classic masters whom he loved, more orotund and formal than is the fashion to-day. The one word which best describes his style, as it does his personality, is *massive.*

Aside from the literary value of his orations, one can never lose sight of the dominant strain of nationalism that runs through them. His emphasis on nationality is his greatest contribution to American political history. Webster had a passion for the larger union of American sentiment, and he "stands to-day as the preëminent champion and exponent of nationality."

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892)

His Life.—In the farmhouse at Haverhill, Massachusetts, occupied for generations by his ancestors, John Greenleaf Whittier was born on December 17, 1807. He belonged to good, sturdy English Quaker stock. As a boy he worked on the farm, but he was not strong physically. Indeed, the hard work of these early years told permanently upon his health. He attended the district school and then, for two terms, the Haverhill Academy. Unlike the other New England poets, Whittier did not go to college, nor did he have academic ancestry. At home he had access to few books; among these, however, were the Bible, of which he was a diligent and devout reader, and the poems of Gray, Cowper, and Burns, to say nothing of the lives of eminent Quakers. When he was about fourteen the village schoolmaster read some of Burns's poems to him, and from that hour he was a lover of the Scotch poet. He wrote poetry for the local newspaper, of which William Lloyd Garrison was then editor, and thus attracted the attention of that ardent abolitionist.

After doing a little hackwork on a Boston paper, Whittier returned to Haverhill and carried on the farm as well as the editorial work of the *Haverhill Gazette.* In 1830 he became editor of the *New England Review* at Hartford, Connecticut, resigning his position the next year on account of continued ill-health.

About this time he seems to have thought of entering politics, in which his newspaper work had caused him to become interested; but in 1833 he

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

decided to give himself unreservedly to the abolition cause, and this decision interfered with both his political and his literary ambitions. In those years the abolitionists were a small and generally despised body of idealists, whom many of their fellow-citizens regarded as opponents of law and order. In the agitation which the anti-slavery party was carrying on politically and socially Whittier became an active worker. He was a delegate to the convention in Philadelphia, which in 1833 founded the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1835 and the following year he was a member of the Massachusetts legislature, and he might have gone to Congress had his health and inclination permitted. He preferred, however, to fight his battles outside of the political arena. From this time to the beginning of the war he aided the abolitionist party in word and deed: he worked for anti-slavery measures in the legislature, was instrumental in the nomination of Charles Sumner for the Senate, edited several abolitionist papers, and wrote many vigorous and impassioned poems against the institution to the overthrow of which he had dedicated his energies.

Meanwhile Whittier had moved to Amesbury, a village not far from Haverhill, and there he wrote much of his best poetry. After his partisan

struggle was over, he settled down to the uneventful life of a country poet. "Snow-Bound," his best-known long poem, perfectly reflects the serenity and quiet joy of his surroundings. The peacefulness of his later years is in pleasing contrast to the troubled agitation of his earlier life, when, in notable contradiction to Quaker traditions, he was penning fiery philippics. He never married, but lived, after his mother's death, with his sister Elizabeth, to whom he was tenderly devoted; after her death in 1864, he lived with a niece and then with three cousins at Danvers. His summers were spent in New Hampshire in that wonderfully beautiful region about Lake Winnipesaukee and Lake Asquam, which he has celebrated in a number of poems and where the memory of him abides among the people. They treasure the old pine tree under which he was accustomed to read and write and they have ancedotes to tell of the simple, democratic ways of the old Quaker poet. He died in 1892, and was buried at Amesbury, Massachusetts.

His Personality.—The prevailing characteristics of Whittier, as one may infer from reading his poetry, are sincerity, simplicity, and a strong moral and religious sensibility. He was entirely democratic in his manner and feeling, but along with his modesty there went the courage born of conviction. Among his neighbors he was the kindly, unaffected man, interested in the little daily concerns of life, conversing with them in their provincial forms of speech—"talking just like other folks," as one of them remarked. He clung to the "thou" and "thee" of his Quaker bringing up. To a stranger who asked for his autograph, handing him a blank card, the old poet said in his direct way: "What dost thee want with it?" Then, after writing his name, he added with a touch of quiet humor: "Friend, it will not do thee any good at the bank."

The intensity of Whittier's moral nature is shown in a piece of advice he gave as an old man to a boy of fifteen: "My lad, if thou wouldest win success, join thyself to some unpopular but noble cause." This is the utterance of an idealist, whose words and acts throughout life sprang from an intense moral conviction. His poems on slavery show this; to his Quaker instincts any abridgment of human liberty was little short of a

crime. Of all the New England poets he had the most uncompromising views on individual freedom.

His Poetry.—Although Whittier wrote much prose—the product in the main of his editorial labors—only his poetry need be considered here. For the sake of convenience this may be roughly divided into (1) **Abolition Poems,** (2) **Descriptive Nature Poems,** (3) **Narrative,** or **Ballad, Poetry,** (4) **Personal Lyrics,** and (5) **Religious Verse.** This is, of course, not an exhaustive classification, for these divisions frequently overlap.

The poems on abolition belong for the most part to the first half of Whittier's life when he was battling with tongue and pen for that cause. In his fight on slavery he repeatedly asserted that his enmity was against the institution and not against individuals. After the war he did all he could toward the reconciliation of the sections. Replying to the charge that he was an enemy of the South, he once wrote: "I was never an enemy to the South or the holders of slaves. I inherited from my Quaker ancestry a hatred of slavery, but not of slaveholders." Of the anti-slavery poems the most noteworthy, perhaps, are "Randolph of Roanoke," in which the Virginia statesman is glowingly commended for freeing his slaves; "Massachusetts to Virginia," a spirited protest from the Bay State to the Old Dominion; and "Ichabod," a scathing denunciation of Daniel Webster for his compromise sentiments as voiced in the famous "Seventh of March" speech (1850). With this last poem should be read "The Lost Occasion," in which is expressed a juster view of Webster. The anti-slavery poems are not particularly interesting to-day and, save for the fact that they reveal one side of Whittier's character, may quickly be passed over. He would never consent to their omission from his works, however; and of all verse written on that once absorbing theme, they are undoubtedly the most impassioned.

More essentially poetic and more abiding are the pieces dealing with nature in New England. Among these are

"Summer by the Lakeside," "The Merrimac," "Hampton Beach," "Among the Hills," and, above all, "Snow-Bound." "Snow-Bound" (1866) is one of the greatest, as it is one of the most popular, American poems. It depicts the Whittier household as the poet knew it in his boyhood. The persons introduced include his father, mother, brother, his two sisters, his uncle and aunt, besides the village schoolmaster and several friends. The homely scene, with its wintertime diversions and

"SNOW-BOUND"
The Whittier Home in Winter

labors, is vividly described—the family around the blazing hearth, the piled-up snow without, the storm, the story-telling, the spinning. This is varied with a character sketch of the schoolmaster—suggestive of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village"—touches of local and foreign legend, and a tender tribute to the memory of his sister Elizabeth in lines almost Wordsworthian:

I tread the pleasant paths we trod,
I see the violet-sprinkled sod
Whereon she leaned, too frail and weak
The hillside flowers she loved to seek,
Yet following me where'er I went
With dark eyes full of love's content.

The birds are glad; the brier-rose fills
The air with sweetness; all the hills
Stretch green to June's unclouded sky;
But still I wait with ear and eye
For something gone which should be nigh,
A loss in all familiar things,
In flower that blooms and bird that sings.
And yet, dear heart! remembering thee,
Am I not richer than of old?
Safe in thy immortality,
What change can reach the wealth I hold?

As a writer of ballads Whittier was remarkably successful. The most famous of these are "Skipper Ireson's Ride," "Barbara Frietchie," "Maud Muller," and "Amy Wentworth." The story on which "Skipper Ireson's Ride" is based was told to Whittier by a schoolmate at Haverhill Academy—how Captain Ireson, because he abandoned a disabled ship off Marblehead, was tarred and feathered and drawn through the town in a cart by the indignant women of Marblehead. Whether the captain was guilty or not, or whether, indeed, the incident ever happened, does not lessen the value of the poem, which, for lively dramatic movement, is one of the best things the poet ever did. The incident celebrated in "Barbara Frietchie" is not historically correct, but the ballad is none the less picturesque and spirited. Everybody has read "Maud Muller," with its redolent hay-meadows, the casual meeting of rustic maiden and urban judge, and the familiar refrain, "it might have been." Whittier liked to bring together such social extremes as those here presented, democratic leveler that he was. This is also done in "Amy Wentworth," in which is prettily related the love of the aristocratic maiden for the hero of the fishing-smack. In such stanzas as these there is felt a Burns-like touch:

The stream is brightest at its spring,
And blood is not like wine;
Not honored less than he who heirs
Is he who founds a line.
. . . . . .

Oh, rank is good, and gold is fair,
And high and low mate ill;
But love has never known a law
Beyond its own sweet will!

Many of Whittier's finest poems are those which reflect more or less directly certain experiences of boyhood and youth. The personal element is strong in most of his utterances, for he was essentially a lyric poet; but such poems as "Memories," "The Barefoot Boy," "My Playmate," and "In School Days," seem autobiographical, so much of real life has been wrought into them. They abound, moreover, in local color, and he who would know the gentler aspects of rural New England should read them. Of "Memories," which delicately tells the story of an early love, he once said: "I hardly knew whether to publish it, it was so personal and near my heart." "The Barefoot Boy" is a perfect picture, which no one could have drawn who had not himself been a barefoot country boy. "My Playmate" was called by Tennyson "a perfect poem"; it is certainly one of the most appealing of personal American lyrics, with its undertone of sadness induced by gentle memories of boyhood love. "In School Days" has become a favorite classic through its early inclusion in school readers: the old schoolhouse, the spelling-match, the "turning down" of the boy by the golden-haired girl, her subsequent grief because she correctly "spelt the word," and her shy confession of love—all these pictures warrant Holmes in calling it "the most beautiful schoolboy poem in the English language." Bad spelling was perhaps a more serious offense then than now. To these poems should be added "The Huskers" and "The Shoemakers," which contain bits of personal experience and pleasing patches of New England local color.

One other group of Whittier's poems should not be forgotten —the hymns. In spirit the Quaker poet was profoundly religious. Indeed, hardly any one of his important poems fails to carry its lesson of faith in the divine love and purpose.

He has contributed to our own literature four or five well-known hymns of trust and brotherhood. These are included in the series of stanzas entitled "Our Master"; perhaps the most familiar stanza is that beginning—

> We may not climb the heavenly steeps
> To bring the Lord Christ down.

Out of the poem it would be easy to construct Whittier's simple creed; this stanza, for instance, might fairly embody it:

> To do Thy will is more than praise,
> As words are less than deeds,
> And simple trust can find Thy ways
> We miss with chart of creeds.

Poetic Characteristics and Contribution.—It is well, whenever possible, to quote a poet on his own art, to give his own words as to what he is trying to do. To the first collected edition of his poems in 1848 Whittier prefixed some stanzas, headed "Proem," which modestly set forth his preferences and intentions. Several of these will serve to show what sort of verse he felt he could best write:

> I love the old melodious lays
> Which softly melt the ages through,
> The songs of Spenser's golden days,
> Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,
> Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew.
>
> Yet, vainly in my quiet hours
> To breathe their marvelous notes I try.
> . . . . . .
>
> The rigor of a frozen clime,
> The harshness of an untaught ear,
> The jarring words of one whose rhyme
> Beats often Labor's hurried time,
> Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here.

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,
No rounded art the lack supplies;
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,
Or softer shades of Nature's face,
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes.

Yet here at least an earnest sense
Of human right and weal is shown;
A hate of tyranny intense,
And hearty in its vehemence,
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own.

One who sympathetically reads Whittier will find this a true statement of his method and matter. His personal characteristics, already mentioned, are simplicity, sincerity, and moral earnestness. His contribution to American literature may be summed up as follows: (1) He is the truest poet of New England country life—its setting and its customs; (2) he is notable for his ability to write simple and direct narrative of local legend and homely incident, in which may be found the heroic of the commonplace; (3) he is one of our best ballad writers; (4) he is our principal religious poet.

The limitations of Whittier's verse are evident enough: there is a lack of variety in form, which, on a continuous reading, results in monotony. He was fond of the simple four-beat measure and did not care to experiment with complicated meters. Not having a keen musical ear, he often made bad rhymes—a defect, by the way, in far greater poets than he. These and other limitations separate him from his more academic fellow poets, frequently, indeed, to his own advantage; for naturalness in art is as great a virtue as finished technique, and Whittier looked into his heart and round about him and wrote. To college training and foreign travel he owed nothing; he was provincial in a good sense. His love of man and nature gave warmth to his song, in which "our common world of joy and woe" is the central theme.

The New England writers already considered have long been classics. There has since risen into prominence no group so clearly defined as these, either in New England or in any other part of the country. In concluding this discussion of the New England classic group, mention must be made of a number of minor authors whose lives and works are inseparably connected with that section. More extended notice, however, is due one later writer at least, whose name, despite the fact that he spent his early years of authorship in New York and won his spurs there, is in the public mind rightly connected with Boston—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907).—Thomas Bailey Aldrich was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where he spent his boyhood, his experiences being recorded in his own *Story of a Bad Boy*. For financial reasons he did not have the opportunity of a college education, but went when he was sixteen or seventeen to New York, where for several years he was a clerk in his uncle's business house. He was more interested in literature, however, than in ledgers, and at nineteen brought out a volume of poems. He next turned to editorial work on New York magazines, joined the literary group made up of Willis, Taylor, Stoddard, and others, and as far as his New England conscience would permit, became a Bohemian. By 1870 he was in Boston editing a literary periodical called *Every Saturday*. Between 1881 and 1890 he was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. The rest of his life was spent in or near Boston.

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

Aldrich is well known as a writer of short stories and poems; he is also the author of three novels, *Prudence Palfrey*, *The Queen of Sheba*, and *The Stillwater Tragedy*, but they do not represent him at his best. The most interesting of his long narratives is *The Story of a Bad Boy*, a thinly veiled piece of autobiography; Rivermouth is Portsmouth and Tom Bailey is Tom Aldrich. It is one of the best boys' stories in literature, full of sympathy and insight, and delightful reading to those who still remember the days of their youth. The volume of short stories that made Aldrich's reputation was published in 1873 as *Marjorie Daw and Other Stories*. *Marjorie Daw* is a charming hoax story, wrought out with clever artistry, which may be read with interest more than once. Aldrich is one of the most finished of our short-story writers. He has also written many delicate sketches of travel as well as essays on men and manners, included in his *Ponkapog Papers*.

The poetry of Aldrich, which appeared in successive editions from 1855 to the year before his death, includes several long narrative productions, such as *Wyndham Towers* and *Judith and Holofernes*, and the tragedy, *Mercedes*; but his shorter poems are undoubtedly his best. He achieved distinction as a writer of sonnets, while his society verse and his nature and personal lyrics show a deftness of touch and a perfection of form rarely equaled in our lighter poetry. "Baby Bell" is a dainty poem, universally known; "Spring in New England" is one of his finest nature poems. He was happy in the naming of his collections of verse—"Interludes," "Cloth of Gold," "Bagatelles." Aldrich has been called "the American Herrick," because of his graceful lyric sensibility. As short-story writer and as poet he shows the delicate sense for form and expression that marks the true artist.

Other New England Writers.—Richard Henry Dana Jr., (1815-1882) a native of Cambridge, Mass., was a writer on international law and a contributor to magazines. His one noted book is *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), a narrative

of his cruise to California for his health, and one of the best boys' books in literature. JAMES T. FIELDS (1817-1881) was for more than thirty years a leading publisher of Boston. He was for a while editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. As a wide reader and book-collector and a friend of authors, he was acquainted with many of the famous men of letters of his time in England and America, and has left in his *Yesterdays with Authors* (1872) valuable impressions of Thackeray, Dickens, Hawthorne, Wordsworth, and others. EDWARD EVERETT HALE (1822-1909), of Boston, is the author of a patriotic story, written with fine literary art, *The Man without a Country* (1863), so realistic that it has been taken as a record of facts. In his ability to make fiction seem truth Dr. Hale resembles Defoe. JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE (1827—) wrote successful boys' stories, of which *Cudjo's Cave* is perhaps the best known; *My Own Story* is a valuable book of reminiscences. SAMUEL F. SMITH (1808-1895), a Baptist minister living near Boston, is author of the national hymn, "My Country, 'tis of thee," besides other less widely known hymns. He was a member of Holmes' "famous class of '29" at Harvard. ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD (1844-1911) was a frequent contributor to magazines and author of *Gates Ajar*, at one time very popular. LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON (1835-1908) wrote many volumes of fiction, poems, and essays. *Some Women's Hearts* is one of her novels. CELIA THAXTER (1836-1894) wrote fine nature-descriptions in her *Isles of Shoals*, inspired by her surroundings on those islands, where her father was lighthouse-keeper. EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886) left three little volumes of delicate poems which rank with the best minor American verse of sentiment. LOUISA M. ALCOTT (1832-1888) was the daughter of A. Bronson Alcott, the Concord transcendentalist. Her varied experiences in life furnished material for her stories, the best of which are found in the series for young people, *Little Women* (1868). These are pictures of New England life as she had known it as a girl.

Later Writers.—Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) belonged to an old New England family of culture. She was born at South Berwick, Maine, the daughter of a physician. She wrote her first sketches of the life about her for the *Atlantic Monthly*. Her best novels are *Deephaven* and *The Country of the Pointed Firs*. In addition to these, she wrote many short stories. She is an admirable portrayer of simple village life; a quiet humor and the breath of the woods are in her books.

Mary Wilkins Freeman (1862—) has come to be regarded as the most eminent of the later New England story-writers. She is a native of Randolph, Massachusetts, and writes with a sure hand and with intense realism of the country folk of her region—farmers, spinsters, school teachers, clergymen. In very vivid fashion she has depicted the humble romance of provincial life. She thoroughly knows the people of whom she writes and the setting of their limited lives; these she treats with a humor bordering on quiet satire, and yet not without sympathy. It is likely that such works as *A Humble Romance*, *A New England Nun*, and *Pembroke*, will hold a high place in our permanent literature of fiction.

Winston Churchill (1871—) was born in St. Louis, but has spent many years in the East. His home is at Cornish, New Hampshire. His principal works are *Richard Carvel*, *The Crisis*, *The Crossing*, and *The Inside of the Cup*. The first three are historical novels, dealing in a striking manner with critical periods in national development; the last is an indictment of the church for its conservative indifference to modern conditions. Churchill's books are strong, thoughtful contributions to later American literature.

Other later writers are Arthur Sherburne Hardy (1847—) who is the author of several strong and charming novels; Harriet Prescott Spofford (1835—), novelist and poet, who wrote *Amber Gods* and other romantic and richly colored stories; and Alice Brown (1857—), of New Hampshire, who is to be classed with Mrs. Freeman in her ability to depict

New England country life. Alice Brown's short stories are brighter and warmer than Mrs. Freeman's. These two writers are the greatest contemporary portrayers of provincial local color in New England. JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY MARKS (1874—), of Massachusetts, has written excellent lyric and dramatic verse; two plays, *Marlowe* and *The Piper* (the Stratford-on-Avon prize drama), have been successfully acted. BLISS PERRY (1860—), Professor of English Literature at Harvard and formerly editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, is author of a number of delightful essays and of excellent biographies of Whitman and Whittier.—To extend this list would simply be to make a catalogue.

THE CHAPTER IN OUTLINE

I. The Concord Group

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): Essays, Poems. Transcendentalist

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862): Walden. Philosopher-naturalist

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864): Short Stories and Sketches, Long Romances. Contributed the romance of Puritanism

II. The Cambridge Group

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882): Lyrics and Ballads; Long Narrative Poems—Evangeline, Hiawatha, Courtship of Miles Standish. Translator of Dante; Prose Romances

James Russell Lowell (1819-1891): Poems—Fable for Critics, Vision of Sir Launfal, Biglow Papers, Present Crisis; Critical Essays. Eminent literary critic, poet of great occasions

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894): Poems; the "Breakfast Table" series (Prose); Novels. Boston poet of social instinct

III. The Historians and the Orators

1. Historians

George Bancroft: History of the United States
William H. Prescott: Conquest of Mexico, Conquest of Peru, etc.
John Lothrop Motley: Dutch Republic, Netherlands.
Francis Parkman (1823-1895): Oregon Trail, Conspiracy of Pontiac, etc.
John Fiske: Beginnings of New England, Old Virginia and her Neighbors

2. Orators

Wendell Phillips: Abolition speeches; The Scholar in a Republic
Daniel Webster (1782-1852): Bunker Hill Orations, Reply to Hayne

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John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892): Lyrics and Ballads; Nature Poems —Snow-Bound; Hymns. Poet of New England Country Life
Thomas Bailey Aldrich: Poems; Prose Stories—Marjorie Daw, etc.

Three movements in "New England Awakening" (about 1840): Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, and Abolitionism,—religious, intellectual, and social liberalism. Each was a form of Idealism. Moral element strong in New England literature.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical and Social.—Any of the general histories mentioned at the beginning of this book; Rhodes's History of the United States (1850-1877); Lowell's Cambridge Thirty Years Ago (Literary Essays, vol. I); Higginson's Old Cambridge (Macmillan); Frothingham's Transcendentalism in New England (Putnam); Emerson's New England Reformers (Essays, second series); Lindsay Swift's Brook Farm (Macmillan).

Literary.—Any of the general histories of American literature already mentioned; Lawton's The New England Poets (Macmillan); Stedman's Poets of America; Burton's Literary Leaders of America (Scribner); Vincent's American Literary Masters; Erskine's Leading American Novelists (Holt); Howells's Literary Friends and Acquaintance; Brownell's American Prose Masters; Vedder's American Writers of To-Day; Stoddard's American Poets and their Homes.

Emerson.—Life by Holmes, Woodberry, Garnett, Sanborn, Cabot; E. W. Emerson's Emerson in Concord; Woodberry's Talks with Ralph Waldo Emerson; Matthew Arnold's Lecture on Emerson (in Discourses in America).

Thoreau.—Life by Sanborn; Channing's Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist; Marble's Thoreau, his Home, Friends, and Books; Burroughs's Indoor Studies (Chap. I).

Hawthorne.—Life by Woodberry, James, Conway, Fields; Julian Hawthorne's Nathaniel Hawthorne and his Wife; Julian Hawthorne's Hawthorne and his Circle; Bridge's Personal Recollections of Hawthorne; Lathrop's A Study of Hawthorne; Gates's Studies and Appreciations.

Longfellow.—Life by Samuel Longfellow, Higginson, Carpenter, Robertson.

Lowell.—Life by Greenslet, Hale, Scudder; Hale's James Russell Lowell and his Friends; Letters, edited by Charles Eliot Norton.

Holmes.—Life by Morse; Haweis's American Humourists; Smalley's Studies of Men.

Whittier.—Life by Perry, Carpenter, Higginson, Pickard; Pickard's Whittier-Land.

Parkman.—Life by Sedgwick, Farnham.

Webster.—Life by Lodge, Curtis, Hapgood.

Selections from New England writers may be found in Stedman and Hutchinson's Library of American Literature, Page's Chief American Poets, Bronson's American Poems, Carpenter's American Prose. Annotated editions of separate works are to be found in the "Riverside Literature Series" of Houghton Mifflin Co., and in collections by other educational publishers.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SOUTHERN WRITERS

Old Southern Life.—The ideals of the older South were social and political, and the cultured class was aristocratic. The plantation, with the great manor house and adjacent negro quarters, was the social unit of the state. Life was leisurely and, under the best conditions, rich in social graces. The chief occupation was agriculture, which, with slave labor, was highly profitable. The vast plantations, the poor roads, and the grouping of many people about the "mansion," prevented the rapid rise of towns and cities, as in the Northern states. This isolation meant the growth of a strong individualism. As there were few thickly populated centers, there was little coöperative effort making for unity of thought and action. A few prominent families virtually formed the neighborhood, intermarrying and thus preserving the old traditions. The community tended to become rigidly conservative. Such a movement, for instance, as the transcendental impulse, which changed the current of New England thought, was scarcely felt in the South.

Secure in his somewhat feudal state, the lord of the manor felt a commendable pride in his ancestry and had a firm belief in the stability of inherited social and political traditions. He stood for the divine right of the individual. This old Southern gentleman, around whom the novelists have thrown a glamour of romance, was withal a worthy descendant of the Cavaliers—kindly, brave, and chivalrous. He still lingers in the imagination as one of the picturesque figures of our civilization; and if, perchance, here and there he outlived the passing of the old order, there was about him an antique atmosphere, which, to the newer generation, was not without a suggestion of pathos.

He seemed a survival and a reminiscence of a day that was dead.

This was the aristocratic side of old Southern life, on which the writers of poetry and romance have loved to dwell. But this was not all of it. There was a sturdy middle class, large and influential, that carried on the industry of the South—the merchants, the professional and business men, the small farmers. These men formed the backbone and the sinews of old Southern life, even as they continue to do in their descendants. They made life democratic in the best sense. Indeed, strictly speaking, there was no rigid aristocracy in the old South; there was, of course, class feeling and there was a certain amount of exclusiveness, but in a new country class distinctions were variable quantities, and democratic simplicity and democratic sympathy existed among the best families of every community. The so-called middle class and the aristocratic class are so blended that it is impossible to find any clear-cut line of distinction between them. Below these were the "poor whites," illiterate descendants of inferior immigrants; then came the negro slaves. This was the composite society of the older South, but, save for the negro, it was, except for settlements of German and Romance peoples here and there, essentially Anglo-Saxon and has remained so.

Attitude toward Literature.—Conditions in the older South were not favorable to the production of literature. In the first place, the climate was not stimulating to creative effort; second, slave labor and agriculture tended to develop a leisure class averse to literary drudgery; third, the lack of thickly populated centers—towns and cities—meant the absence of incentives to the writing of books, for literature flourishes best in such strongholds of intelligence; fourth, there were no great public libraries in the South, no great publishing houses, and no well-supported magazines, all of which are essential to literary productiveness; and fifth, there was no good system of public education, whereby the masses of the people had

opportunities for training. Of all these drawbacks to the making of literature, the third, fourth, and fifth are particularly noteworthy. The conditions implied in the second reason for the dearth of literature require special consideration.

The idealism of the older South showed itself in political debate, in ornate oratory, and in the enjoyment of the unwritten poetry of plantation life. For many years before the war of 1861-'65 the Southern statesmen exerted a powerful influence in the making and directing of national policies. A Southern group of political leaders virtually controlled the government. The orators of the old South have not been excelled in our national history. They were clever debaters on the science and art of statecraft. They diligently studied public questions, they had read the classic orators, and they constructed their speeches after the best models of that ancient art. In these old Southern statesmen the finest traditions of the school of Burke and Pitt and Fox still lived. Thus the energy of the most gifted men was spent on political discussion; the old-time Southerner was a politician by instinct and training, and his ambition was political. To him the spoken word was more than the written word. Consequently he sought preferment at the bar, on the bench, in the forum, and not in the world of letters.

Moreover, the typical Southerner, reared amidst somewhat aristocratic social conditions, looked upon literature as a polite accomplishment, a means of entertainment, and not as a livelihood. He might compose poetry as an elegant diversion, but not seriously as a vocation, certainly not for pay. One of the sweetest minor poets of the South, Richard Henry Wilde, wrote anonymously and would not acknowledge his verses until many years after they were written. Philip Pendleton Cooke, another singer of merit, was advised by his friends to give himself to things more worth while than poetry,—such, for instance, as settling neighborhood disputes! There were, to be sure, some excellent writers in the ante-bellum South,

but they had many struggles, as we shall see, and they were lonely. The cultivated public did not encourage literature as a profession.

It must not be thought, however, that the educated people of the old South did not care for literature. Quite the contrary is true: they were great readers. Prosperous country gentlemen had their private libraries, in which were to be found the best classic authors, particularly the English writers of the eighteenth century, and among those of the early nineteenth, certainly Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron. Members of two famous New York publishing houses have declared[1] that their firms shipped more books to the South before the war than to any other part of the country. Lovers of literature, especially of the older English novelists and poets, Southern people of culture read widely; but their conservatism, their semi-feudal form of society based on slave labor, and their isolation from great centers, naturally tended to discourage newer movements of thought and the making of books. It is surprising, indeed, that so much was accomplished in literature and of such high quality, under circumstances passively, though not actively, adverse. We can account for it only on the ground that the Southerner has always been an incurable idealist. This radiant idealism shines throughout Southern literature.

The Newer South.—The great war from 1861 to 1865 swept away the old order, and out of the ruins of her ancient commonwealths the South set to work to rebuild her civilization. Slavery was dead, and there was need accordingly of a new racial, industrial, and political adjustment. It proved a painful process, but it revealed an unsuspected resourcefulness and an energy little short of marvelous. The splendid heroism of it all has been the wonder and the admiration of every thoughtful student of modern American development. The

[1] J. H. Harper: *The House of Harper.*
George H. Putnam: *George Palmer Putnam.*

courageous rise out of the dust and ashes of defeat has equaled the military heroism of her leaders in the great struggle which resulted in the loss of the South's ancient prestige in the nation.

Since the terrible days of reconstruction, when chaos seemed to reign and financial ruin waited at the gates, the South has been waxing fat in her industrial prosperity; and with this prosperity has come a new outburst of literary energy. The old symbols of her glory—the bar, the bench, the forum, the manor-house—have been succeeded by the newer symbols of power—the factory, the furnace, and the schoolhouse. Along with these, one may prophesy, in the light of the lesson of history, a still greater literary awakening. Vast storehouses of material for poem and story await the transforming hand of genius. Since the war this material has been steadily drawn upon for the creation of a fresh and varied literature; more recent writers are using it in fiction with singular effectiveness.

General Divisions of Southern Literature.—Much of the older literature of the South, as we have already seen, consisted of political essays, biographies and histories, and orations. Along with these we find a number of romances and sketches of colonial life, miscellaneous lyrics in the manner of the English Cavalier poets, plantation melodies, and scattered patriotic songs and satires. The authors of these were not professional literary men, but chiefly lawyers and statesmen, whose writing of poetry and fiction was merely incidental.

What may be called "Standard Southern Literature" had its rise in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It will make for clearness to treat the subject under the three heads of Poetry, Oratory, and Prose Fiction. Following the discussion of the principal authors, the most prominent minor writers may be briefly considered. Then the living writers, whose places are not yet definitely fixed, may be noticed. In so short a history as this, many names must needs be omitted or merely glanced at. The great name in Southern literature is of course Edgar Allan Poe; so versatile and lofty a genius

cannot be accurately classified, but as he was primarily a poet, he may be considered under that heading.

POETRY

Southern poetry is essentially lyric. It consists chiefly of "short swallow-flights of song." There are few long, sustained narrative poems; Southern poets have written little epic verse, and they have attempted few dramatic pieces. The qualities most conspicuous are beauty, melody, and exquisite rhythm. The local coloring is noteworthy in the poets of the lower South; the interpretation of nature's moods and outward aspects is done with delicate artistic sensibility. The musical element is strong.

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

No singer of old story
  Luting accustomed lays,
No harper for new glory,
  No mendicant for praise,
He struck high chords and splendid,
Wherein were fiercely blended
Tones that unfinished ended
  With his unfinished days.

—JOHN HENRY BONER

His Life.—Edgar Allan Poe, poet, short-story writer, and critic, was born in Boston, January 19, 1809, the son of David Poe and Elizabeth Arnold Poe, actor and actress. His parents were playing in Boston at the time of his birth. His father belonged to a prominent Maryland family and was the son of a Revolutionary officer of the same name; his mother was English, and, at the time of her marriage to David Poe, a young widow in the troupe which he had joined several years before at Charleston, South Carolina. Before Edgar was three years old, he was left an orphan in Richmond. A prosperous tobacco merchant of that city, Mr. John Allan, took the child into his home, and Mrs. Allan became a mother to him. From this family Poe received his middle name. The Allans went to England in 1815 and remained abroad five years. Edgar attended during this time a school at Stoke-Newington,

a suburb of London, where he was regarded as a rather reserved boy and a good student. His foster-parents returned to Richmond in 1820, and in their home the boy spent the next six years. He became noted as a swimmer, a declaimer, and in general as a youth of unusual ability. He had excellent training under private tutors and by his seventeenth year was ready for college.

In February, 1826, Poe entered the University of Virginia. Here he made a fine record in languages, but through his fondness for gambling he contracted debts which his foster-father refused to pay. There was no official censure of Poe by the University; it was Mr. Allan who withdrew him and put him to work in his business office. Poe had remained

ROTUNDA AND LAWN
University of Virginia

in college a year, demonstrating his great intellectual capacity, as well as his proneness to dissipation. The little room on the "West Range," which he occupied as a student, is now marked by a tablet bearing the inscription under his name, *Domus Parva Magni Poetae* ("The Little Dwelling-place of a Great Poet"); and in the University library is the fine bronze bust of the poet by Zolnay. [1]

Poe did not long remain in Mr. Allan's counting-house; that same year (1827) he ran away to Boston and soon thereafter enlisted in the army under the name of Edgar A. Perry. That summer he published in Boston his first little volume of poems, *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. The latter part of the year he was sent to Fort Moultrie, near Charleston, South Carolina, and several months later to Fortress Monroe, Virginia. So satisfactory was Poe's service that about this time he was made a sergeant-major. Somehow his whereabouts became known to Mr. Allan, perhaps through the young soldier's own efforts, and a furlough was obtained in order that he might once again see Mrs. Allan, who was

[1] See Frontispiece.

very ill. It was too late, however; with Mrs. Allan's death he lost his one sympathetic friend. The next year (1829) Mr. Allan helped to provide a substitute in the army and arranged for him to enter West Point.

Poe entered West Point on July 1, 1830. In such studies as he specially liked he did well. The monotonous routine of military duties he disliked, and accordingly neglected them with more or less regularity. All the time, however, he was a great reader. But reading and fits of dissipation do not make the soldier; and in 1831, because of neglect of

LITERARY MESSENGER BUILDING
Richmond, Va.

duties for two successive weeks, he was court-martialed and dismissed. Meanwhile, Mr. Allan had married again, and any expectations which Poe might have entertained of inheriting his fortune were now in vain. He was thus alone and adrift in the world. To New York City he went, determined to rely on literature. There in 1831 appeared a volume of *Poems*, issued on faith in the subscriptions of his fellow-cadets at West Point, among whom his literary ability had become well known.

The rest of Poe's troubled life was given to literature, either as editor or author. From New York he went to Richmond, but found Mr. Allan obdurate; the break between them was complete. Then he proceeded to Baltimore, where he became a member of the household of his aunt, Mrs. Clemm. In 1833 he won a prize of one hundred dollars for his story, *MS. Found in a Bottle*, offered by a Baltimore paper. In 1835, through the influence of John P. Kennedy, he obtained an editorial position on the *Southern Literary Messenger*, of Richmond. By his original stories and his vigorous and penetrating, though sometimes hasty and unjust, criticism, he rapidly won wide distinction and increased the circulation of the magazine from seven or eight hundred to five thousand. His reputation was made, and fortune seemed to smile upon him. In 1836 he married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, a girl of fourteen—a fragile embodiment of his shadowy dreams of feminine beauty. But his fondness for drink again blighted his career: he lost his editorial position on the *Messenger*, and in 1837 returned to New York, where he remained about a year without finding permanent work.

To Philadelphia Poe went in 1838. Here he hoped to establish a magazine; meanwhile, he wrote many stories for two periodicals of that literary center, the *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Graham's Magazine*, on both of which he held positions for brief periods. Here, too, he published a collection of stories, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. After six years of mingled success and failure in Philadelphia, he removed to New York.

The remaining years of Poe's active literary life were spent in New York. In the metropolis he was befriended by N. P. Willis, editor and poet, in whose paper, the *Evening Mirror*, appeared in 1845 "The Raven." Poe was now at the height of his fame. About this time he secured control of the *Broadway Journal*, and it seemed at last that his dream about establishing a magazine of his own had come true. Poor management and ill-advised criticism of contemporaries, however, soon put an end to that promising enterprise. An accumulation of debts wrecked the magazine and brought its editor to the verge of destitution. In the tiny cottage at Fordham, just out of New York, where Poe lived with his guardian angel, Mrs. Clemm, and his dying wife, poverty also dwelt. In 1847 Virginia Poe died, and for many months thereafter the poet was ill and despondent. Through the tender care of Mrs. Clemm he was gradually restored to health and fitness for his work.

During the next two years some of Poe's best work was done. He wrote "Ulalume," "The Bells," and "Annabel Lee," gave public lectures and readings to sympathetic audiences, and projected plans for a new

magazine. His last visit to Richmond was in September, 1849, where he was cordially received by his old friends. Here he met Mrs. Shelton, an old sweetheart, became engaged to her, and after a short stay in the city of his boyhood, began the return journey northward to arrange for the wedding. In Baltimore on October 3, he was found unconscious near a room in use as a voting-place and taken to a hospital. There, without regaining consciousness, he died on October 7, 1849, and was buried in Westminster churchyard.

His Personality.—According to those who knew him well, Poe was a man of striking appearance. "He had a broad forehead, a large, magnificent eye, dark brown and rather curly hair; well formed, about five feet seven in height. He dressed neatly in his palmy days—wore Byron collars and a dark neckerchief, looking the poet all over. The expression of his face was thoughtful, melancholy, and rather stern."[1] Bishop Fitzgerald, who saw the poet one day in Richmond in 1849, speaks of his features as "sad, yet finely cut, shapely head, and eyes that were strangely magnetic, as you looked into them."

A man of highly sensitive nature, keen intellect, refined and elegant manners, and fascinating personality, touched with pride, morbidness, and vanity, impelled by whim and impulse and a desire for some unattainable ideal of beauty: such was Poe, as we see him through his letters and his literary productions. Nobody really understood him; even while associating with men and women, he was in a sense remote from them. Women doubtless understood him better than men; feminine companionship and sympathy were essential to him. Though he was intemperate, his refinement and fastidiousness saved him from sensuality. The moral purity of his prose and poetry seems to reflect his own thinking and his domestic relationships. He loved solitude too deeply to make many friends; he was a lonely, restless mortal, ever seeking and never finding happiness and peace.

[1] J. H. Hewett, editor of *Baltimore Saturday Visitor*.

"My life has been whim, impulse, passion,—a longing for solitude, a scorn of all things present in an earnest desire for the future": this is Poe's description of himself. In spite of his weaknesses, he was a hard worker. No man could have left such a mass of enduring literature without great industry. His love for drink was partly inherited, partly the result of circumstances, but he was no habitual drinker; indeed, for long periods he seems to have been quite abstemious. His devotion to his child-wife and his mother-in-law was beautiful. Some of his

POE'S COTTAGE
Fordham, New York

letters to Mrs. Clemm reveal a childlike dependence upon that good woman. His solicitude for the frail Virginia in those poverty-stricken days at the Fordham cottage is touching. All in all, the man Poe, battling with demons and dreaming ineffable dreams of angels, is the most pathetically tragic figure in our literature.

His Poetry.—A slender volume of verses is Poe's contribution to poetry. The earliest of these verses were published in Boston in 1827, when Poe was under twenty years of age; in 1829 a revised edition, with important additions, appeared;

two years later a collection of his poems was published by the author. After this, his poetry was first printed in periodicals with which he was connected. The longest of the earlier poems underwent numerous revisions, especially "The Sleeper," which was a favorite with Poe. Of these earlier poems, "Israfel" and "To Helen" have proved most popular, as most truly expressive of Poe's lyric genius. To these should be added the exquisite stanzas from "Al Araaf," beginning—

> Ligeia! Ligeia!
> My beautiful one!

In these youthful verses there are reminiscences of the manner of Coleridge and of Shelley, who were in a sense Poe's poetic masters.

The most characteristic of the later poems are "The Haunted Palace" (found in the prose tale, "The House of Usher"), "The Raven" (1845), "Ulalume" (1847), "The Bells" (1849), "For Annie" (1849), and "Annabel Lee" (1849). The later poems show the wonderful mastery of his art which Poe finally reached through careful workmanship. He professedly wrought out his verses according to a well-defined and elaborated theory of poetic composition, the aim of which, he asserts, was to produce unusual effects by certain repetitions and the use of onomatopoetic words,—that is, words with sounds echoing the sense. Without his gift of high poetic inspiration, of course, success could not have been attained, no matter how fine the theory; it is to be remembered, however, that Poe, true artist that he was, diligently worked on his poems.

The range of Poe's poetry is quite limited. His favorite subject is the death of a beautiful woman. This he conceived to be the most poetic, as it is the saddest, in the realm of romantic art. His ideal was fragile beauty blighted by untimely death. The sadness growing out of the contemplation of this is a somewhat pleasureable melancholy without the disturbing consequences of genuine tragedy. Thus, Poe limited himself

to lyric effects, and a lyric poem at its best is brief. Wishing to produce one emotional effect and only one, he consistently followed his theory that "totality of effect or impression" cannot be obtained in a long poem. Accordingly his poems are short lyric compositions, each on a single emotional idea, in which rhythmic language is employed to express the highest beauty. To him, as to Keats, pure beauty was the end and aim of poetic endeavor.

The substance of a poem often seems very slight; sound is more than sense. And yet Poe is not simply "the jingle man"; many of his poems have some one well-defined thought, as a prose paraphrase will show. Of course the thought, stripped of its poetic imagery and its musical tones, may appear comparatively commonplace, but that is true of most lyric poetry. With the exception of "The Bells," which was deliberately intended to be mainly sound, you will find, on a thoughtful reading, that most of the other poems have more substance than you supposed. In some of them, indeed, there is an allegorical significance, a symbolism, which is not without an ethical value. "Eldorado," for instance, might be put with Longfellow's "Excelsior" for its uplifting idealism. Doubtless in reading Poe's poetry we are too much inclined to apply it directly to the poet's own sad and broken life. It should be judged at its face value.

The most famous poem of Poe is, of course, "The Raven," which is assumed to be more or less expressive of the poet's personal feelings. Written in 1845, it had an immediate and widespread popularity, which has not waned. It would be difficult to find another American poem which is more familiar at home and abroad. Poe carefully explained how he wrought it out, but his "ratiocination" fails to account for the wonderful effects produced. The poem is mentally suggestive, it is true, but the pictures and the haunting sounds—particularly the recurring "Nevermore"—are even more compelling and unforgetable than the thought. Such mastery of vocal effects,

such musical acrobatics, we cannot find elsewhere in our poetry. More sadly melodious are "Annabel Lee" and "Ulalume," both written in memory of his own lost Virginia. In these lyrics perfection of form and melody is happily achieved; the union of music and articulate speech is complete.

His Short Stories.—Poe wrote over sixty short stories, or "tales," as he called them. Although he won in 1833 a prize with his "MS. Found in a Bottle," the first of his short stories proper was "Berenice," which appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* for March, 1835. Others followed in rapid succession, some hurriedly written and of little merit, but most of them real artistic creations. Among the most famous are "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Shadow," "The Gold Bug," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Purloined Letter," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Mystery of Marie Rôget," "The Cask of Amontillado," "The Masque of the Red Death," "A Descent into the Maelström," "The Tell-Tale Heart." His one long story, "The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym," is a tale of adventure.

As far as subject matter is concerned it is not easy to make a satisfactory classification of the stories. Some of them, such as "Silence" and "Shadow," are mere sketches in poetic prose; several, such as "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Pit and the Pendulum," and "The Fall of the House of Usher," might be called studies in the psychology of terror or horror; a few, such as "Hans Pfaal," "A Descent into the Maelström," and "Eureka," are pseudo-scientific; some are detective stories—"The Purloined Letter," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"; "William Wilson" (partly reminiscent of Poe's school days in England) is a study in dual personality; several are delicate pastels of ethereal beauty—"Morella," "Eleonora." In general, the stories center about three motives—terror, beauty, mystery. Poe recurs time and again to a few favorite situations and suggestions.

In structure the stories, according to Professor C. Alphonso Smith,[1] "fall into only two classes . . . . In the first, there is an unbroken cumulative movement from the first paragraph to the last; in the second, the mystery deepens in the first half and is completely solved in the second half. The first type may be represented by a capital A: the lines converge and culminate at the apex; the second type may be represented by a capital B: the story in other words is divided into two equal and corresponding sections or semi-circles." Illustrations of the first type are "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Pit and the Pendulum"; of the second, "The Purloined Letter" and "The Gold Bug." The stories of the first class move steadily to a climax; those of the second—detective stories—set forth the facts in the first half and the explanation in the latter half. The A-type stories have more "atmosphere"; the B-type stories are more severely intellectual, being more or less of the nature of puzzles.

Poe had a well-defined theory for the making of a short story, which he enunciated in this famous paragraph from his review of Hawthorne's *Tales* (1842):

> A skillful artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tends not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction.

[1] C. Alphonso Smith: "The American Short Story," pp. 22-23. This admirable account of the American Short Story was originally delivered as a lecture at the University of Berlin when the author was "Roosevelt Professor" there.

To this theory Poe adhered with admirable consistency. In any story of his there is perfect unity, "totality of effect," as he called it, compression and economy of language. From the first sentence to the last the movement is by the "air-line" method, without the waste of a word. Herein he differs from his great contemporary, Hawthorne. Hawthorne's stories move in a more leisurely, rambling fashion, and they often have introductions or bits of description which delay the movement. Poe goes at the subject in the most direct way, without preliminary remarks. Moreover, Hawthorne, as we have seen, is fond of moralizing; the ethical element looms large in his stories, and the "moral tag," a sort of concluding "preachment," often drives home the point. Poe, on the contrary, does not moralize; and if perchance the ethical element is present—as it occasionally is—it is mainly in solution, purely inferential. There is, besides, far less use of physical symbol in Poe than in Hawthorne. And so these two great short-story writers differ in several important respects. Both of them notably fulfill the conditions of a successful modern short story as laid down by Professor Brander Matthews,[1] namely, that, at its best, it should have compression, originality, ingenuity, and a touch of fancy. In structure, however, Poe is the superior artist. In him the loose sketch of Irving had, so to speak, evolved into the perfect form.

His Critical Essays.—As an editor and contributor to magazines, Poe naturally wrote many book reviews; as a creator of literature, he took pains to set forth in careful detail his critical theories. Much of his book-reviewing was hackwork, done under pressure for the waiting printer, and may be passed over without extensive comment. One of these reviews, however, has come to be regarded as one of the most valuable pieces of criticism in our literature—the review of Hawthorne's *Prose Tales* from which the discussion of the essentials of the short story, or "prose tale," has just been quoted. As a critic of

[1] Brander Matthews: *The Philosophy of the Short Story*, p. 23.

contemporary authors, Poe was refreshingly independent, a genuine free lance. He was not always just—as, for instance, when he so severely belabored Longfellow for plagiarism—but his judgments, in the main, have proved to be those of posterity. He cordially disliked the namby-pamby, flattering reviews of his day, when American writers were saying soft, sweet things of each other, often regardless of truth. His pungent and, at its best, discriminating comments cleared the air; for despite his prejudices and his little jealousies, Poe did justice to Longfellow, Hawthorne, and Lowell. Longfellow he put at the head of American poets, and was enthusiastic in his praise of Lowell and Hawthorne.

Two other essays by Poe are standard pieces of literary criticism—*The Poetic Principle* and *The Philosophy of Composition.* In the first of these he elaborates his theory of poetry, the gist of which is, that poetry, "the rhythmical creation of beauty," has as its object the giving of pleasure and not the imparting of truth or the enforcing of a moral; and that a long poem, since intense, pleasurable emotion cannot be long sustained, is a "contradiction in terms." Long epic poems are accordingly simply a string of short poems. In *The Philosophy of Composition* Poe goes into a detailed and, it must be confessed, somewhat tedious exposition of how he composed "The Raven." His analytic, puzzle-loving mind delighted in such pieces of mental gymnastics, but the reader, however loyal he may be to Poe, inwardly protests against such a dissection of a poetic masterpiece.

Characteristics and Contribution.—Poe was first of all a pure artist. The artistic instinct in him never slept. He had an infallible sense of form. He loved the unusual, the weird, the creatures and places on the borderland of spirit and matter. He hated the conventional and the commonplace. His poetic scenes are in the "misty mid-region of Weir." The persons and places of his short stories are naturally more tangible, more human, though many of them reflect no locality

known to the geographers. His women—Berenice, Morella, Ligeia, Eleonora, Lenore, Madeline, Helen, Annabel Lee—are shadowy beings, phantoms of unearthly loveliness, that die young. Youthful beauty touched with the chill of death is to him the very essence of poetry. Cavernous glooms, remote regions with haunting liquid names, voices of horror and of ineffable sweetness, refrains and echoes,—these are some of the things that make the web of his wonderful verse and suggest to the mind a series of enchanting pictures and to the ear a concourse of charming sounds. Music, indeed, is an all-pervading element of his poetry.

Along with this ethereal imagination there was in Poe the highest analytical power. The mathematical faculty was united with the purely artistic to an unusual degree. He liked to solve hard riddles and complicated cryptograms; indeed, he wasted a good deal of time on these exercises, when he might have been writing immortal poems and stories. He read the first few chapters of Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, and correctly foretold the rest of the plot. In several of his sketches he predicted with amazing accuracy some of the wonders of modern invention, such as skyscrapers and airships. His mind dwelt on the mysteries of the world and his imagination bodied forth strange creations out of the unknown.

The poetry of Poe is limited in quantity and in range of subject matter, but in originality, beauty, and harmonious effects, it is the highest in American literature. More than any other of our poets he has what we instinctively feel to be the quality of pure genius. Poe is the father of the modern short story. With the appearance of "Berenice" in 1835 the short story took on a compact, unified form, which it has ever since maintained. Poe invented the detective story, that numerous and popular branch of the story family: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter" are prototypes of the "Sherlock Holmes" stories. Poe was an acute and original critic. He has made valuable contributions

on the theory of poetry and of the short story, and on the philosophy of composition.

The fame of Poe abroad is probably greater than that of any other American writer, while at home it has steadily grown as the shadows cast by his unfortunate life have receded through the years. Foreign writers, such as Swinburne, Rossetti, Stevenson, Jules Verne, Guy de Maupassant, and Baudelaire, have acknowledged their indebtedness to him as a master of verse and of the short story; others have paid him the tribute of imitation. As an artist of the beautiful and the terrible, as an idealist, as a dreamer of fantastic as well as beneficent dreams, his appeal is world-wide.

SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881)

His Life.—Sidney Lanier, poet and essayist, was born in Macon, Georgia, February 3, 1842, the son of a lawyer. He came of an ancestry of musicians; several Laniers were directors of music at the English Court from Elizabeth to Charles II. His first paternal American ancestor came to Virginia in 1716; his mother was a Virginian of Scotch descent. The Laniers were of Huguenot extraction. From his childhood the future poet had a passion for music; he was able at an early age to play on almost every musical instrument, but his favorite was the flute. At fourteen he entered the sophomore class of Oglethorpe College, Midway, Georgia, where he graduated in 1860. His fine record won for him a position as instructor in the college.

The next year the war began and Lanier joined the Confederate army. His battalion went to Virginia, and he took part in the battles around Richmond. He was in the Signal Service in Virginia and North Carolina, and finally became an officer on a blockade runner. His vessel was captured in 1864 and he was imprisoned for five months at Point Lookout. During the earlier part of the war Sidney Lanier and his brother Clifford were together; indeed, Sidney had refused promotion in order that he might not be separated from his brother. Released in February, 1865, he returned on foot to Georgia, with a twenty-dollar gold piece in his pocket and his dear flute, which had cheered him through the trying years of war. But his health was shattered; within him were the seeds of consumption; the rest of his life was a struggle against that dread disease.

While in the army Lanier had begun a novel on his war experiences; this he finished in 1867 while clerking at a hotel in Montgomery, Alabama, and published in New York the same year under the title, *Tiger Lilies*. The book was not successful, and the young author tried school-teaching for a while. In December, 1867, he married Miss Mary Day, of Macon, Georgia. Returning to Macon in 1868, he began the study of law with his father. For the next five years he studied and practised law in Macon, but his heart was not in that profession. Music and literature, his first loves, still called him. But in the South, distracted by the woes of Reconstruction times, there was little opportunity for the gentler arts. Accordingly, Lanier, disregarding the protest of kindred and

BIRTHPLACE OF LANIER
Macon, Ga.

friends, who saw in his determination to devote himself to music and letters only hardship and failure, went North, and in 1873 found employment as first flute in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra of Baltimore. So far as possible, his father, won over by his son's courageous love for his art, aided him in carrying out his plans; and Mrs. Lanier, who with the children remained in Macon, encouraged the poet with unselfish devotion.

From 1873 to his death Lanier's home was Baltimore, and his profession was musical and literary. Here he found musicians, literary people, and libraries. He made firm friends, among whom were Gibson Peacock, the Philadelphia editor; Charlotte Cushman, the great actress; and

Bayard Taylor, poet and traveler. Realizing the need of wider and deeper knowledge if he would speak with authority on music and literature, he became a diligent student of early English literature.

Recurring attacks of his disease compelled him to seek health in visits to the mountains of North Carolina and to the sunny climate of Florida. His work, however, went steadily on: he wrote guidebooks for railroad companies and did other kinds of hackwork; he lectured to schools and private classes, wrote magazine articles and poems, and prepared editions of old romances for young people. His poem, "Corn," published in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1875, won high praise; and the next year, through Bayard Taylor's interest in him, he was asked to write the cantata for the opening of the Centennial Exposition at Phila-

MEMORIAL TABLET TO LANIER
Johns Hopkins University

delphia. His family now joined him in Baltimore. Other trips to the South in search of health followed. Still he labored on with intense consecration to his twin arts, playing in concerts and giving lectures on literature.

In 1879 Lanier was appointed lecturer on English literature at Johns Hopkins University, a position which afforded him an assured income and which was entirely congenial. For this he had well prepared himself by the serious study of Old English and by a great range of reading. His lectures at Johns Hopkins were mainly on the relation between music and verse and on the development of the English novel. Many of these were delivered in great bodily weakness: the lecturer was, towards the last, unable to stand, and his voice could scarcely be heard, while his temperature was sometimes as high as one hundred and four. But the study, the writing of lectures, and the making of poems went steadily on.

The rest of the tragic story may be told in a few sentences. The sufferer, accompanied by his brother Clifford, went in May, 1881, to the mountains of North Carolina, near Asheville, to try the virtues of

camp life. Mrs. Lanier soon joined him, and the poet was moved to Lynn, in the same state. A slight improvement followed, but it was only the rift in the clouds before sunset. On September 7, 1881, Lanier's life went out. He was buried in Baltimore. In the halls of the University, which he served so briefly and yet with such distinction, a memorial tablet has been placed to his memory.

His Personality.—"The appearance of Lanier was striking," says Dr. Gilman. "There was nothing eccentric or odd about him, but his words, manners, ways of speech, were distinguished." Another friend[1] thus pictures him: "His eye, of bluish gray, was more spiritual than dreamy—except when he was suddenly aroused, and then it assumed a hawklike fierceness. The transparent delicacy of his skin and complexion pleased the eye, and his fine-textured hair, which was soft and almost straight and of a light brown color, was combed behind the ear in Southern style. His long beard, which was wavy and pointed, had even at an early age begun to show signs of turning gray. His nose was aquiline, his bearing was distinguished, and his manners were stamped with a high breeding that befitted the 'Cavalier' lineage."

All who knew Lanier bear witness to his charming personality. His refinement and distinction of manner impressed strangers, while his sympathetic interest in people and things made friends. His home life was beautiful. In him were combined the domestic virtues and the high gift of song. Along with these went an immense capacity for work: the pathos of his life is found in his struggle for deep and varied knowledge under the grim shadow of death. He was a man of open mind and modern spirit, hospitable to the new and reverent toward the best in the old. His life was worthy of his ideals. "He always seemed to me," writes one[2] who knew him, "to stand

[1] H. Clay Wysham in *The Independent*, November 18, 1897. This and the preceding quotation are taken from Mims's *Life of Sidney Lanier*, pp. 300-301.

[2] Quoted from a letter in Mims's *Life of Sidney Lanier*, p. 303.

SIDNEY LANIER

for chivalry as well as poetry, and his goodness was something you felt at once and never forgot."

His Poetry.—A slender volume of verse, the production of fifteen or sixteen years, is the contribution of Sidney Lanier to our poetry. The earliest poem we have, "The Dying Words of Stonewall Jackson," belongs to the years 1865; the latest, "Sunrise," is the inspiration of a dying man. Among his shorter poems, all essentially lyrical, are "My Springs," "Evening Song," "Life and Song," "The Waving of the Corn," "The Mocking Bird," "Tampa Robins," "Song of the Chattahoochee," and "Ballad of Trees and the Master." Of these the "Song of the Chattahoochee" (1877) is the best known. The movement of the poem at once takes the ear; the hastening stream becomes a human voice telling of experiences in its winding course and of temptations resisted. Deaf to the calls of dalliance along the way, the Chattahoochee hurries along on its mission of duty to dwellers in the lowlands:

> But oh, not the hills of Habersham,[2]
> And oh, not the valleys of Hall[2]
> Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
> Downward the voices of Duty call—
> Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main,
> The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
> And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
> And the lordly main from beyond the plain,
> Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
> Calls through the valleys of Hall.

The finest of the short lyrics is "Evening Song," perfect in form and in haunting melody. It suggests an Elizabethan lyric, into which has come a modern wistfulness, such as one finds in several songs in Tennyson's *Princess*:

> Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,
> And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,
> How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
> Ah! longer, longer, we.

[2] Counties in northeastern Georgia.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,
As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;
Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted sands.
O night! divorce our sun and sky apart
Never our lips, our hands.

"The Waving of the Corn" reflects the full richness of the Southern field in summertime even better than does his longer poem, "Corn" (1875), which was the first of his productions to attract wide attention. "Clover" (1876) is another poem of color and fragrance. "Life and Song" treats of the poet's art as an outward expression of the poet's life—

His song was only living aloud,
His work a singing with the hand.

"My Springs" is a loving tribute to his wife's eyes:

My springs from out whose shining gray
Issue the sweet, celestial streams
That feed my life's bright Lake of Dreams.

Of the longer poems, those most truly expressive of Lanier's genius are "The Symphony," "The Marshes of Glynn," and "Sunrise." "The Symphony" (1875) is a plea for more heart and less head in our national industrial life—a more humane treatment of the poor. It is an indictment of Trade's heartless arrogance by a chorus of musical instruments, in which the clear notes of the flute and the violin are the voices pleading for a chivalry of labor. The poem closes with the oft-quoted line:

Music is Love in search of a word.

"The Marshes of Glynn" is one of a projected series of six poems, only three of which were completed. The "marshes" are those of Glynn county, Georgia, around the seacoast city

of Brunswick. In "The Marshes of Glynn" the time is a June evening; the sun is setting and the tide is coming in. The impressive scene is painted in alternating lights and shadows: the musical stanzas, varied to harmonize with the coloring of the forest and the movement of the flood, swell out to the final union of marsh and sea. The poet's soul is exalted and set free by the vastness and peace of the scene:

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and nothing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain

The sweep and majesty, the moral suggestiveness, and the solemn musical tones, of "The Marshes of Glynn" entitle it to be called Lanier's masterpiece. It shows a sureness of grasp and a definiteness rarely found in his poetry. Read aloud in a sympathetic voice it takes captive the ear and uplifts the spirit by its harmony and its splendid imagery.

"Sunrise" is in sad reality the poet's sunset hymn. He penned it in weakness, when the hectic flush was coloring his fancy. It is a rhapsody of sweet sounds and a riot of colors. All the million-veined splendor bursts full-orbed in the rising sun, which seems to symbolize the triumph of art over traffic:

Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas
Of traffic shall hide thee,
Never the hell-colored smoke of the factories
Hide thee,
Never the reek of the time's fen-politics
Hide thee,
And ever my heart through the night shall with knowledge
Abide thee,
And ever by day shall my spirit, as one that hath
Tried thee,
Labor, at leisure, in art,—till yonder beside thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done.

Less musical and of clearer structure are the two ballads, "The Revenge of Hamish" and "How Love Looked for Hell," good narrative pieces of considerable dramatic power. "The Psalm of the West" (1876) is a fine centennial hymn.

Lanier had lofty ideas in regard to the mission and the form of poetry. He emphasizes the moral element in art; herein he differs from Poe. "Unless you are suffused with truth, wisdom, goodness, and love," said he, "abandon the hope that the ages will accept you as an artist." His poetry is accordingly leavened with spiritual truth. "The beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty" is a favorite phrase with him. He believed, moreover, that between poetry and music there is a close kinship. This theory he fully elaborates in his *Science of English Verse*, which will be briefly considered presently. Throughout his poetry the musical element gives tone and color; indeed, several poems are so formless, so much a matter of sound, that they seem to hover midway between the articulate and the inarticulate, ever on the point of vanishing into "airy nothings." They are struggling to be free from the bondage of speech; they would clothe themselves in the shimmering and tenuous vestments of musical rhapsody. Language fails and only the radiant, ethereal spirit of melody remains.

His Prose Works.—Lanier prepared editions of several old romances for boys—*King Arthur, Mabinogion, Froissart, Percy*—in which he succeeded, in spite of the hackwork nature of the undertaking, for the subjects were congenial to his poetic temperament. Other prose works are *The Science of English Verse, The Development of the English Novel*, and *Shakespeare and his Predecessors*, originally prepared as lectures. Of these works only one, *The Science of English Verse*, demands notice.

In *The Science of English Verse* Lanier sets forth with abundant illustration the theory that poetry may be musically annotated. Poetry, he says, should be measured, as music is, by *time* rather than by *accent*. Instead of feet in poetic scansion he would have beats—time-units instead of stress-units. He

would not count syllables and accents, but measures; and he would gain richness of coloring—what is called "tone-color"—by the free use of alliteration, assonance, and rhyme. In short, he would apply to poetry the principles of musical composition. This theory Lanier works out with great ingenuity, and to lyric verse its application often seems warranted, for the pure lyric and music are closely akin. In general, however, the theory attaches entirely too much importance to sound and color, to the neglect of substance and clearness. It is an interesting and clever attempt to effect a perfect union between music and poetry, but more admirable than convincing.

Characteristics and Contribution.—Lanier's poetry reflects the coloring of Southern field and stream and forest. It shows a delicate appreciation of the myriad lights and shadows of landscape and wood. It reveals a high-souled, chivalrous regard for trees, herbs, birds, and flowers. Between the poet and nature there seems to exist a Platonic friendship—no common intimacy, but a sacred reverence for personality in natural objects. Along with this coloring and spiritual sensibility goes the perfection of harmony. Music is everywhere; his soul is steeped in it.

Lanier's unique contribution, then, is the consistent application of musical technique to poetry. New metrical forms and stanza-arrangements were brought by him into English verse. Herein he most resembles Swinburne. To unmusical people his poetry is sometimes vague and almost meaningless, because the idea is so often merely secondary. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." This exquisite tone-color frequently means the sacrifice of directness and simplicity. His poetry is apt to impress the casual reader as involved and fragmentary—meandering rivulets of song losing themselves in marsh or clover field. But despite its formal limitations, the verse of Lanier has the clear accent of originality and loftiness. It is luminous with the sense of imperishable beauty and vital with human sympathy and spiritual ideals.

HENRY TIMROD

HENRY TIMROD (1829-1867)

His Life.—Henry Timrod was born in Charleston, South Carolina, December 8, 1829. On his father's side he was of German descent, and on his mother's, of English. His father was a man of literary taste and sometimes wrote poetry. Henry went to the Charleston schools and later, attended the University of Georgia, but delicate health and lack of means prevented him from remaining to take his degree. At school and college he was specially devoted to English literature and the classics and to athletic sports. He early showed a love for nature. Like many other literary men, he studied law only to find it distasteful. Then he did some tutoring. Meanwhile, he was writing poetry; his verses were published in Boston in 1860, but the small volume was little read in the stirring times of on-coming war. He entered the Confederate army, but soon found his weak constitution unequal to the hardships of camp life. He served as army correspondent, and in one way and another proved his loyalty to the cause in which his heart was enlisted. His stirring war lyrics show his patriotism.

In 1864 Timrod became associate-editor of the *South Carolinian* at Columbia. Feeling settled and having an assured income, he married Miss Kate Goodwin, of Charleston, an English girl—the "Saxon Kate" whom he celebrates in several poems. But disease was making rapid inroads on his frail body, despite the cheerful struggle of his dauntless spirit. The death of his child added to his sorrows. The desolation of war was about him, and too weak to work, he was manfully fighting a losing battle. Poverty was an inmate of his home; with pathetic humor he wrote to his friend Paul Hamilton Hayne: "We have—let me see—yes, we have eaten two silver pitchers, one or two dozen silver forks, several sofas, innumerable chairs, and a huge—bedstead!" Thus was his household furniture going for food. A visit to the poet Hayne at Copse Hill, Georgia, brought a slight improvement in his health, but it was only temporary. Shortly after his return to Columbia the end came, and the poet was laid to rest by the side of his child in Trinity churchyard in that city. "His latest occupation was correcting the proof sheets of his own poems, and he passed away with them by his side, stained with his lifeblood."

His Personality.—"In stature," says Dr. Bruns,[1] "Timrod was far below the medium height. He had always excelled in boyish sports, and, as he grew to manhood, his unusual breadth of shoulder still seemed to indicate a physical vigor which the slender wrists, thin transparent hands, and habitually lax attitude too plainly contradicted. His square jaw was almost stern in its strongly pronounced lines, the mouth large, the lips exquisitely sensitive, the gray eyes set deeply under massive brows, and full of a melancholy and pleading tenderness, which attracted attention to his face at once, as the face of one who had thought and suffered much."

This same friend also speaks of Timrod's shyness and reserve in general society and of his readiness to speak out his heart to a congenial companion. He was a man of deep sympathy and of an almost feminine gentleness of temperament. His devotion to his family and his friends was beautiful, for he had an affectionate nature. In that little circle of literary spirits whom William Gilmore Simms gathered about him at Charles-

[1] From the *Memorial Edition of Henry Timrod's Poems*, Introduction, pp. xv-xvi.

ton, Timrod was one of the choicest and ablest. His cheerfulness and courage in suffering and poverty command our admiration.

His Poetry.—In 1873, six years after Timrod's death, his friend Hayne edited his poems, to which was prefixed a memoir. Not until 1899 was the "Memorial Edition" published; this

HOME OF TIMROD
Columbia, S. C.

standard collection of his poems was the work of the "Timrod Memorial Association." In this small volume is to be found some of the most representative poetry of the South. Broadly speaking, the work of Timrod falls into four classes—nature poems, personal tributes, patriotic lyrics, and sonnets.

In his nature poems Timrod was singularly happy. "The Cotton Boll" is justly one of the most famous American poems. It is full of the hazy, dreamy, gleaming atmosphere of the lower South. Out of the snowy little boll the poet musically evolves a wealth of color and magic power, which, in his rapt vision, is both radiantly beautiful and truly beneficent.

I turn thy cloven sheath,
Through which the soft white fibers peer,
That, with their gossamer bands,
Unite, like love, the sea-divided lands,
And slowly, thread by thread,
Draw forth the folded strands; . . .
And as the tangled skein
Unravels in my hands,
Betwixt me and the noonday light,
A veil seems lifted, and for miles and miles
The landscape broadens on my sight,
As, in the little boll, there lurked a spell
Like that which, in the ocean shell,
With mystic sound,
Breaks down the narrow walls that hem us round,
And turns some city lane
Into the restless main,
With all his capes and isles! . . . .
Joins with a delicate web remotest strands;
And gladdening rich and poor,
Doth gild Parisian domes,
Or feed the cottage-smoke of English homes,
And only bounds its blessings by mankind!

The stanzas entitled "Spring" form one of the freshest spring poems in English or American verse. The fragrant breath of the new season is in these lines, and the goddess of spring appears while you are looking:

Out in the lonely woods the jasmine burns
Its fragrant lamps, and turns
Into a royal court with green festoons
The banks of dark lagoons.

In the deep heart of every forest tree
The blood is all aglee,
And there's a look about the leafless bowers
As if they dreamed of flowers.

. . . . and you scarce would start,
If from a beech's heart,
A blue-eyed Dryad, stepping forth, should say,
"Behold me! I am May!"

Among the poems of personal tribute, direct or indirect, the one called "Katie" deserves first place. It is in honor of his wife, who was an English girl. Consider the grace and color of this passage, fragrant with the bloom of English meadows:

I meet her on the dusty street,
And daisies spring about her feet;
Or, touched to life beneath her tread,
An English cowslip lifts its head;
And, as to do her grace, rise up
The primrose and the buttercup!
I roam with her through fields of cane,
And seem to stroll an English lane,
Which, white with blossoms of the May,
Spreads its green carpet in her way!

Timrod was passionately devoted to his native state, and the best of his patriotic verse celebrates the virtues of South Carolina, or the heroism of her sons who fell in the War between the States. Through the poem "Carolina" rings the militant call of patriotism:

Girt with such wills to do and bear,
Assured in right, and mailed in prayer,
Thou wilt not bow thee to despair,
Carolina!

Throw thy bold banner to the breeze!
Front with thy ranks the threatening seas
Like thine own proud armorial trees,[1]
Carolina!

The "Ode" written for the decoration of the Confederate graves in Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, in 1867, is one of the finest lyrics in American literature—almost as perfect in form and phrasing as an ode of the English poet, Collins:

[1] Palmetto trees in the seal of South Carolina.

Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,
  Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;
Though yet no marble column craves
  The pilgrim here to pause.

In seeds of laurel in the earth
  The blossom of your fame is blown,
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,
  The shaft is in the stone!

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years
  Which keep in trust your storied tombs,
Behold! your sisters bring their tears,
  And these memorial blooms.

. . . . . .

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!
  There is no holier spot of ground
Than where defeated valor lies,
  By mourning beauty crowned!

Timrod wrote a series of fifteen sonnets, several of which show great artistic merit. The first sonnet in the series gives Timrod's own poetic creed:

Poet! if on lasting fame be bent
Thy unperturbing hopes, thou wilt not roam
Too far from thine own happy heart and home;
Cling to the lowly earth and be content!
So shall thy name be dear to many a heart;
So shall the noblest truths by thee be taught;
The flower and fruit of wholesome human thought
Bless the sweet labors of thy gentle art.
The brightest stars are nearest to the earth,
And we may track the mighty sun above,
Even by the shadow of a slender flower.
Always, O bard, humility is power!
And thou mayest draw from matters of the hearth
Truths wide as nations, and as deep as love.

Poetic Qualities.—Sensitiveness to the delicate sights and sounds of nature is revealed in the poetry of Timrod. He had

the gift of the happy word, and he strikes off now and then an exceedingly felicitous phrase. There is a crystal clearness in his lines which comes from a fundamental sincerity and simplicity in his thinking and feeling. He had a sense for perfection that belongs to the true artist. Some of his lyrics have strains that strongly suggest Collins and Tennyson. Timrod caught with exquisite grace the beauty of Southern field and wood. He worships beauty, but he is none the less a devout ministrant at the shrine of truth. He is, withal, a true son of the South—"probably the most finely endowed mind," says Professor Trent, "to be found in Carolina, or indeed in the whole South, at this period."

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830-1886)

His Life.—Paul Hamilton Hayne was born in Charleston, South Carolina, January 1, 1830, the son of a naval officer. The family to which he belonged was prominent politically and socially. His uncle, at whose house he spent much time after the death of his father, was Robert Y. Hayne, orator and statesman, who was Webster's antagonist in the famous debate in the United States Senate. After graduating at Charleston College, young Hayne studied law, but, as in the case of Lanier and of Timrod, it made little appeal to him, and he turned to literature. As one of the editors of the *Southern Literary Gazette* and later as editor of *Russell's Magazine*, as a contributor to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and as a member of Simms's literary coterie, he had good training for literature. From 1855 to 1859 he published in Boston three volumes of verse. Then the war came on and, too frail to be a regular soldier, he became aide to Governor Pickens, serving until his health gave way. The terrible ravages of war left him in poverty.

Strong in hope and courage, Hayne went with his family at the close of the war to the barren pine-bluffs near Augusta, Georgia. On a little tract of land among the pine trees he built a rude cottage and named the place Copse Hill. With the cheerful helpfulness of his wife, he began life anew. The humble home was made happy by work and the spirit of content, great though the contrast was with the cultured surroundings of his earlier days. The world soon came to know of Copse Hill: hither came letters from English friends and admirers and from American writers of renown—Longfellow, Whittier, Bayard Taylor. Here in peace, though not in dreamful ease, Hayne spent the rest of his days,

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE

writing poetry and, so far as in him lay, speaking words of reconciliation between the two great sections which war had rent asunder. An illustrated edition of his poems, with an introduction by Mrs. Margaret J. Preston, was published in Boston in 1882. The end came on July 6, 1886, and the poet was laid to rest, "after life's fitful fever," in the cemetery at Augusta, Georgia. In this city a monument has been erected to his memory.

His Personality.—One who knew him well speaks of Hayne's "distinguished appearance . . . . . with starry magnetic eyes that glowed with responsive sympathy." Sympathy was, indeed, a dominant trait in him; it is not necessary to read widely in his poetry to discover that, and the testimony of his friends confirms it. Those who visited him at Copse Hill forgot the crudeness of his dwelling and the desolation of the region in the personal charm of their host. He had, of course, a sensitive feeling for beauty; he had also a deep sense of human brotherhood. As an evidence of this last may be mentioned his ardent desire for a speedy reconciliation between the North

and the South. His cheerfulness and courage, his uncomplaining endurance of privation after years of cultured independence, and his steadfast devotion to literature for a livelihood, give to his life a touch of the heroic.

His Poetry.—Hayne wrote a large amount of poetry; the authorized edition of 1882 contains more verses and a greater variety of themes than the works of Lanier and Timrod combined. The poems are grouped under such headings as "Youthful Poems," "Sonnets," "Dramatic Sketches," "Poems of the War," "Legends and Lyrics," "Humorous Poems," and "Poems for Children." In so brief a treatment as this, a few typical poems—lyrics of sentiment, mainly on nature's moods and messages—must suffice to illustrate Hayne's qualities. The group called "Legends and Lyrics" contains some of his finest verse.

The perfect understanding of his pine-tree neighbors, standing like silent sentinels all about him, is seen in lines like the following from "Aspects of the Pines"; indeed, the larger significance of nature—its calming effect on the human spirit—breathes through these verses:

Tall, somber, grim, against the morning sky
  They rise, scarce touched by melancholy airs,
Which stir the fadeless foliage dreamfully,
  As if from realms of mystical despairs.

A stillness, strange, divine, ineffable,
  Broods round and o'er them in the wind's surcease,
And on each tinted copse and shimmering dell
  Rests the mute rapture of deep-hearted peace.

Elsewhere he writes of "The Pine's Mystery":

Passion and mystery murmur through the leaves,
  Passion and mystery, touched by deathless pain,
Whose monotone of long, low anguish grieves
  For something lost that shall not live again!

One of his most pleasing poems is "The Mocking-Birds," those enchanting songsters of the Southern wood so dear to the poetic heart. This is the first of the eight stanzas:

Oh! all day long they flood with song
The forest shades, the fields of light;
Heaven's heart is stilled, and strangely thrilled
By ecstasies of lyric might;
From flower-crowned nooks of splendid dyes,
Lone dells a shadowy quiet girds,
Far echoes wakening, gently rise,
And o'er the woodland track send back
Soft answers to the mocking-birds!

The soft, languorous breezes of the far South woo the reader in imagination through lines like these from "A Dream of the South Winds":

From the distant Tropic strand,
Where the billows, bright and bland,
Go creeping, curling round the palms with sweet,
faint under-tune,
From its fields of purpling flowers
Still wet with fragrant showers,
The happy South Wind lingering sweeps the royal
blooms of June.

Hayne was a prolific writer of sonnets. No other American poet, indeed, has written so many. Many of these attain high levels of excellence; compelling lines, happy phrases, thrill the sensitive reader now and then; as, for instance, the conclusion of this fine sonnet, "My Study," written before his Charleston house was burned:

This is my world! within these narrow walls,
I own a princely service. The hot care
And tumult of our frenzied life are here
But as a ghost and echo; what befalls
In the far mart to me is less than naught;

I walk the fields of quiet Arcadies,
And wander by the brink of hoary seas,
Calmed to the tendance of untroubled thought;
Or if a livelier humor should enhance
The slow-time pulse, 'tis not for present strife,
The sordid zeal with which our age is rife,
Its mammon conflicts crowned by fraud or chance,
But gleamings of the lost, heroic life,
Flashed through the gorgeous vistas of romance.

One of the last poems of Hayne is called "In Harbor." There are lines in it suggestive of Poe, but more human and more trustful:

I think it is over, over,
  I think it is over at last,
Voices of foeman and lover,
  The sweet and the bitter have passed;
Life, like a tempest of ocean,
  Hath outblown its ultimate blast;
There's but a faint sobbing seaward
While the calm of the tide deepens leeward,
And behold! like the welcoming quiver
Of heart-pulses throbbed thro' the river,
  Those lights in the harbor at last,
  The heavenly harbor at last!

Poetic Qualities.—Hayne's life of isolation in the Georgia pines gave his verse a flavor peculiarly Southern. "The place," says Maurice Thompson,[1] "became a sort of Southern Mecca, to which loving folk made pilgrimages; and its name, 'Copse Hill,' grew familiar to all the world." Naturally, therefore, the sights and sounds about him formed the staple of Hayne's poetry. The best of it is lyric, showing a delicate perception of nature—her endless variety and her gentle harmonies. The pine and the mocking-bird sing in the lines. Music, mild meditation, and a faint undertone of sadness—these are qualities felt by the reader of these lyrics. They

[1] See *The Critic*, Vol. 38.

reflect a gentle, sympathetic, refined soul, an artist of the beautiful—"the last literary Cavalier." The technique of his verse entitles him to a high rank among nineteenth century singers: its smoothness, melody, and imagery charm the ear

COPSE HILL
Home of Hayne, near Augusta, Ga.

and inner eye. There are touches of Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Poe, in the lyrics of Hayne; but at his best he is essentially original—"the laureate of the South."

ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN (1839-1886)

His Life.—Abram J. Ryan, or Father Ryan, as he is generally called, was born in Norfolk, Virginia, August 15, 1839. Shortly before this his parents had come from Ireland. When seven or eight the boy was taken by his parents to St. Louis, and in that city he attended the Catholic schools. He was designed for the priesthood, and accordingly entered the institution for the training of priests at Niagara, New York. About the time he left there, the war between the North and the South had begun and the young priest became a chaplain in the Confederate army. Throughout the war Father Ryan served the Southern cause with singular devotion. At the close of the conflict, restless and unreconciled to the fortunes of war, he went from city to city: he served

as priest for short periods in Nashville, Knoxville, Augusta, and Mobile. In Augusta he edited for a while *The Banner of the South*. His longest residence (1868-1880) was in Mobile, at the Cathedral and in charge of St. Mary's Church. The sympathy and generous help of the North in the yellow fever epidemics of the late seventies won from him expressions of gratitude at such an evidence of a reunited country. During the last five years of his life, Father Ryan gave most of his time to lecturing and literature. In Louisville, Kentucky, whither he had gone to a monastery for rest, he died, April 22, 1886.

FATHER RYAN

His Poems.—Father Ryan's poems, or "verses," as he too modestly preferred to call them, reveal an earnest, sympathetic, sincere soul, intensely patriotic and profoundly religious. His poems lay bare his heart, which was given unreservedly to the South. Lost causes are always poetic, and Father Ryan is preëminently the laureate of a lost cause. The two poems of his most often quoted are "The Conquered Banner" and "The Sword of Robert Lee." The first is touched with a sadness born of the failure of high hopes; the ensign is a sacred emblem, reverently to be enshrined in the affections as the faded garment of a dear one dead:

Furl that Banner, softly, slowly!
Treat it gently—it is holy—
  For it droops above the dead.
Touch it not—unfold it never,
Let it droop there, furled forever;
  For its people's hopes are dead!

The second has a fine martial swing, and is one of the best poetic tributes to the great military chieftain;

Forth from its scabbard, pure and bright,
Flashed the sword of Lee!
Far in the front of the deadly fight,
High o'er the brave in the cause of Right,
Its stainless sheen, like a beacon light,
Led us to Victory.

. . . . . .

Forth from its scabbard all in vain
Forth flashed the sword of Lee;
'Tis shrouded now in its sheath again,
It sleeps the sleep of our noble slain,
Defeated, yet without a stain,
Proudly and peacefully.

The dominant strain in Ryan's poems is religious. He was a mystic. The eager yearning of his spirit for peace is felt in his verses; a note of restless seeking for something beyond his reach and sight is there; the prevailing tone is sad. Some of the pieces seem autobiographic; one fancies, for instance, that in "Their Story Runneth Thus" is half-hidden a boyish romance of the poet's. Certainly the lyrics come from within: the emotion is simple and genuine, and the singer sings because he must. That is the reason Father Ryan has held his own beyond the troublous times that saw the birth of most of his songs. His simple, musical lines will continue to touch the hearts of that large number, which at times includes us all, who go to poetry mainly for its ministry to the gentler sentiments and the primal emotions. If we should seek to find one poem which most deeply voices the inner feelings of this poet-priest, perhaps we would hit upon the "Song of the Mystic":

I walk down the Valley of Silence—
Down the dim, voiceless valley—alone;
And I hear not the sound of a footstep
Around me, save God's and my own;
And the hush of my heart is as holy
As hovers where angels have flown!

. . . . . .

I walked in the world with the worldly;
I craved what the world never gave;
And I said: "In the world each Ideal,
That shines like a star on life's wave,
Is wrecked on the shores of the Real,
And sleeps like a dream in a grave."

And still did I pine for the Perfect,
And still found the False with the True;
I sought 'mid the Human for Heaven,
But caught a mere glimpse of its Blue:
And I wept when the clouds of the Mortal
Veiled even that glimpse from my view.

And I toiled on, heart-tired of the Human,
And I moaned mid the mazes of men,
Till I knelt, long ago, at an altar
And I heard a voice call me. Since then
I walk down the Valley of Silence
That lies far beyond mortal ken.

John R. Thompson (1823-1873).—John Reuben Thompson was born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1823, educated at the University of Virginia, and after studying law in the same institution, settled in Richmond. Like many other men of literary inclinations, he gave up the law and turned to letters. In 1847 he became editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, with which he continued until 1859. Going farther south for his health, he edited for a time the *Southern Field and Fireside* at Augusta, Georgia. In London, whither he had gone in 1863 with the hope of aiding the Southern Confederacy, Thompson was on the staff of the *London Index*. Upon his return to America after the war, he became literary editor of the New York *Evening Post*. In this position he was making fame and friends, but ill-health drove him to Colorado, whence he returned to New York in 1873 only to die. He is buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond.

While Thompson's service as editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, through which he introduced to the public a number

of aspiring authors, was considerable, it is as a poet that he is chiefly remembered. Among his noteworthy poems are "Music in Camp," "The Battle Rainbow," "Ashby," and "The Burial of Latanè." His translation of Gustav Nadaud's famous little poem, "Carcassonne," is itself a classic. Thompson was a friend of Edgar Allan Poe, and his address on that wayward genius is one of the best pieces of contemporary appreciation. He was an acute critic and a writer of graceful, polished verse.

James Barron Hope (1829-1887).—James Barron Hope was born in Norfolk, Virginia, educated at William and Mary College, served for a time as secretary to his uncle in the navy, studied law and in 1856 became commonwealth's attorney of Hampton, Virginia. Meanwhile, he had begun writing poetry for the *Southern Literary Messenger*. In 1857 his first volume, *Leoni di Monota and Other Poems*, was published in Philadelphia. The same year Hope delivered the memorial poem at the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement at Jamestown; the following year (1858) he recited a poem at the unveiling of Crawford's equestrian statue of Washington at Richmond. After the war, in which he served with distinction, he settled at Norfolk and engaged in journalism. He was chosen by Congress to write the poem for the Yorktown Centennial in 1881. For the laying of the cornerstone of the Lee statue in Richmond in 1887, he had prepared the poem, but another[1] read it, for death had cut the poet off a month before.

Because of his fame as a writer of patriotic memorial verses, Hope has been called "Virginia's laureate." He wrote many other poems, however; prominent among them is "The Charge at Balaklava," which is full of martial music. This spirited poem was widely popular in its day. A nature poem, "Three Summer Studies," presents a series of pleasing pictures of a summer day in the country, not unworthy of Thomson or

[1]His friend, Capt. W. Gordon McCabe of Richmond.

Cowper. He also wrote graceful tributes to friends and a handful of good sonnets. A volume of selections from his poems, entitled *A Wreath of Virginia Bay Leaves*, has been edited by his daughter.

Margaret Junkin Preston (1820-1897).—Among the poets of the war period, Mrs. Margaret J. Preston holds a prominent place. She was born in Philadelphia, came with her father, Rev. George Junkin, D. D., to Lexington, Virginia, in 1848, when he assumed the presidency of Washington College (Washington and Lee University), married Professor Preston, of the Virginia Military Institute in 1857, and spent the rest of her long life in the little Virginia town. She was a woman of rich and varied culture and of rare social and literary gifts. Much of her poetry deals with the war and the heroes of the South; her story in verse, *Beechenbrook* (1866), is a picture of the great struggle and was very popular. In 1870 Mrs. Preston published a volume of poems, *Old Songs and New*, which had a wide reading North and South. Several other volumes followed—*Cartoons* (1875), *For Love's Sake* (1886), and *Colonial Ballads, Sonnets, and Other Verse* (1887).

Mrs. Preston is the representative poetess of the Confederacy; her war poems and her devotional lyrics constitute her finest verse, though she wrote well on other themes. Her sonnets won the praise of Paul Hamilton Hayne, himself a sonneteer of high merit, and she could write admirable ballads of sentiment. Among her devotional poems the best known are "For Love's Sake," "A Year in Heaven," "By-and-By," "The Daily Drill," and "Chiselwork." Of the war poems those most often quoted are "The Shade of the Trees," founded on the last words of Stonewall Jackson, and "Gone Forward," referring to the last words of General Lee. "The Mystery of Croatan" is an excellent ballad on the lost colony of Roanoke. Restraint, sincerity, and artistic finish mark the poetry of Mrs. Preston.

A Group of Famous Poems.—Six short poems by Southern singers have become classic, and are to be found in most popular collections. These poems have saved their authors' names from oblivion; the poems are more than the poets. The first is Francis Scott Key's "The Star-Spangled Banner" (1814), of which mention has already been made.[1] The next in order of time is the little lyric, "My Life is Like the Summer Rose" (1815), of Richard Henry Wilde of Georgia, originally entitled "Stanzas." The first stanza of the three is the most familiar, but the last is perhaps the best:

My life is like the prints which feet
  Have left on Tampa's desert strand;
Soon as the rising tide shall beat,
  All trace will vanish from the sand;
Yet, as if grieving to efface
All vestige of the human race,
On that lone shore loud moans the sea—
But none, alas! shall mourn for me!

The third is "A Health" (1825), by Edward Coate Pinkney of Maryland, the first stanza of which is this:

I fill this cup to one made up
  Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
  The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
  And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
  'Tis less of earth than heaven.

The fourth poem is "Florence Vane" (1847), by Philip Pendleton Cooke of Virginia, one stanza of which runs thus:

Thou wast lovelier than the roses
  In their prime;
Thy voice excelled the closes
  Of sweetest rhyme;

[1] See page 97.

Thy heart was as a river
Without a main.
Would I had loved thee never,
Florence Vane!

Another famous production is "The Bivouac of the Dead" (1847), by Theodore O'Hara of Kentucky, written in memory of the Kentucky soldiers who had fallen at Buena Vista in the Mexican War, when their remains were brought home. This is the finest martial elegy in American literature; its familiar lines are conspicuous in the national cemeteries:

On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

Still another notable piece of verse is "Maryland, My Maryland" (1861), by James Ryder Randall, who at the time he wrote it was teaching in Louisiana. This is the best martial lyric of the wartime.

To this group of six famous poems should be added "Little Giffen of Tennessee" (1867), by Dr. Francis O. Ticknor of Georgia—the true story of a wounded boy in the Confederate army whom Dr. Ticknor and his wife cared for. It is a lyric of great dramatic power. The concluding stanza is a fitting climax to the pathetic tale of heroism—a knightly tribute to the boy soldier, who, after he was nursed to health, bravely plunged into battle again and perished:

I sometimes fancy that were I king
Of the courtly knights of Arthur's ring,
With the voice of the minstrel in mine ear,
And the tender legend that trembles here,—
I'd give the best on his bended knee,
The whitest soul of my chivalry,
For little Giffen of Tennessee.

LATER POETS

Beginning with the last quarter of the nineteenth century, literature in the South took on new life; the old order had passed and a new industrial movement heralded the birth of a fresh literary impulse. This has been interpreted to the world by many minor poets and by several who may justly lay claim to higher rank; of these major singers Sidney Lanier is chief, and has already been considered. It now remains to discuss his later contemporaries and successors. As representative of latter-day Southern poetry, only two are chosen for treatment in this brief sketch; others, some of them perhaps equally as important, must have merely a word of comment.

JOHN B. TABB

John Banister Tabb (1845-1909). — John B. Tabb was born in Amelia county, Virginia; served on a blockade runner during the war and was imprisoned at Point Lookout, where he met Sidney Lanier; after the war he studied music and taught school; in 1884 he became a priest in the Roman Catholic Church; was professor of English in St. Charles College, Ellicott City, Maryland, until his death. His first volume of poems appeared in 1884; subsequent volumes were *An Octave to Mary* (1893), *Poems Grave and Gay* (1899), *Later Lyrics* (1902), and *Rosary in Rhyme* (1904).

As the names of these volumes indicate, the poems of Father Tabb are lyrics grave and gay. Most of them are short—from

four to eight, ten, twelve lines, and each little lyric has unity of thought and sincerity of feeling. As a dewdrop or a gem, each mirrors a little bit of life, whether it be of nature, personal sentiment, or religious devotion; and each is an artistic whole, daintily and delicately made. The touches of fancy suggest the Cavalier poets, but without their artificiality; the airiness and lightness recall Sappho and Shelley and Keats, but with more human warmth. The poems on nature are perhaps the best, though the little conceits on love and life are exquisitely phrased. There is always a point to a poem—an idea delicately put in a small compass; the sentiment does not vanish in misty vagueness; the body may be slight, but it is still a body. Here are two stanzas from "Intimations":

I knew the flowers had dreamed of you,
  And hailed the morning with regret;
For all their faces with the dew
  Of vanished joy were wet.

I knew the winds had passed your way,
  Though not a sound the truth betrayed;
About their pinions all the day
  A summer fragrance stayed.

The charm of artistic restraint and elusive suggestion is in those lines. In the following little poem entitled "Evolution" is compressed the whole of life, with intimations of immortality:

Out of the dusk a shadow,
  Then, a spark;
Out of the cloud a silence,
  Then, a lark;
Out of the heart a rapture,
  Then, a pain;
Out of the dead, cold ashes,
  Life again.

Though limited in range, the verse of Father Tabb has not been surpassed in American poetry in the happy union of daintiness of form with compactness of thought.

Madison Julius Cawein (1865—).—Madison J. Cawein was born in Louisville, Kentucky, educated at the high school of that city, and has found time from the demands of business life to write a large amount of poetry. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, his poems began to attract wide attention from readers of magazines; in such a steady stream have they flowed from his pen that, as originally published in book form, they fill more than twenty small volumes. His first volume appeared in 1887 as *Blooms of the Berry*; others are *Moods and Memories* (1892), *The Garden of Dreams* (1896), *Undertones* (1896), *Shapes and Shadows* (1898), and *Nature Notes and Impressions* (1906). In 1902 a volume of selections from his poetry, called *Kentucky Poems*, was published, with an appreciative introduction by Edmund Gosse, the English critic; and in 1907 a five-volume edition of his poems was issued. Already a prolific poet, Cawein is steadily adding to his treasury of song. His first book of verse was warmly commended by William Dean Howells, and since then lovers of poetry at home and abroad have found in his lyrics notes of high distinction.

MADISON CAWEIN

The poetry of Cawein shows him to be a lover of nature and a subtle interpreter of her moods and coloring. He likes to write out of doors under the spell of her tones. He has a faculty of minute observation, and his sympathetic and sensitive spirit is delicately responsive to the sights and sounds

about him. For him the woods are still alive with the nymphs and fairies, as of old when the world was young:

The gods are dead; but still for me
  Lives on in wildwood brook and tree
Each myth, each old divinity.

For me still laughs among her rocks
  The Naiad; and the Dryad's locks
Drop perfume on the wild-flower flocks.

And these lines from "The Whippoorwill" have all the twilight atmosphere of the countryside in summer, tinged with the passionate glow of a poet's fancy:

Above long woodland ways that led
To dells the stealthy twilights tread,
The west was hot geranium-red;
    And still, and still,
Along old lanes, the locusts sow
With clustered curls the May-times know,
Out of the crimson afterglow,
We heard the homeward cattle low,
And then the far-off, far-off woe
    Of "whippoorwill!" of "whippoorwill!"

A calmer tone pervades "To a Wind-Flower," something of Wordsworth and of Bryant:

Teach me the secret of thy loveliness,
  That, being made wise, I may aspire to be
As beautiful in thought, and so express
  Immortal truths to earth's mortality;
Though to my soul ability be less
  Than 'tis to thee, O sweet anemone.

Teach me the secret of thy innocence,
  That in simplicity I may grow wise,
Asking from Art no other recompense
  Than the approval of her own just eyes;
So may I rise to some fair eminence,
  Though less than thine, O cousin of the skies.

Like Keats, whom he often suggests, Cawein is a worshipper of pure Beauty, believing that "beauty born of beauty—that remains." His verse is shot through with threads of richest color; the imagery, the warmth, the luxuriance, the music of his lines delight the senses; at times there is an almost cloying sweetness. Through its profusion of coloring his verse abounds in sensuous charm.

Other Later Poets.—The passing tribute of a line must be paid to SAMUEL MINTERN PECK (1854—) of Alabama, author of "A Southern Girl" and the popular "Grapevine Swing"; WILLIAM HAMILTON HAYNE (1856—) of Georgia, in whom the lyric gift of an illustrious father has been perpetuated; ROBERT BURNS WILSON (1850—) of Kentucky, author of many pleasing lyrics; WALTER MALONE (1866—) of Tennessee, author of "October in Tennessee," "Opportunity," "A Florida Nocturne," and other poems; ROBERT LOVEMAN (1864—) of Georgia, who has published several volumes of verse; HENRY JEROME STOCKARD (1858—) and BENJAMIN SLEDD (1864—) of North Carolina, each of whom has written (the one in "Fugitive Lines" and the other in "From Cliff and Scaur" and "The Watchers of the Hearth") lyric poems of rare grace and sweetness; and MRS. OLIVE TILFORD DARGAN of South Carolina, who has written several poetic dramas of merit.

ORATORY

The older South was a land of orators. Mention has already been made of the conditions that encouraged oratory—the fondness for political debate, the general aspiration toward statesmanship, the ambition for public leadership. Out of these conditions sprang a race of orators who have not been excelled in American history. Naturally, with the passing of vital interest in the questions which they debated, their speeches have correspondingly suffered; but whether we read them to-day or not, the tradition of them is a glorious one and

should be perpetuated. A few of these old orations, dealing with fundamental propositions and phrased in artistic language, belong to literature; they permanently appeal to the emotions and the imagination. Some of them are more ornate than the simpler taste of our time approves; some of them, indeed, seem to us stilted and bombastic; but that was the sort of public speaking in fashion in those days, when "sound and fury" on the rostrum signified more than it does to-day. In reading these speeches, we must remember that no oration can properly be judged without some knowledge of the occasion of its delivery, the temper of the times, and the personality of the orator.

Some account was given in a preceding chapter of Southern orators in the Revolutionary period, of whom Patrick Henry was chief. The next great occasion for oratory was the slavery agitation in the years from about 1830 to 1860; after the war, the rebuilding of the stricken South and the reconciliation of the sections furnished themes for oratory—the birth of the "New South." The last decade of the nineteenth century saw a wonderful industrial development in the South, attempts at racial adjustment, and a greater interest in national problems; along with these movements began a remarkable educational revival. Contemporary public speaking is accordingly concerned with one or more of these subjects.

Out of a long list of Southern orators from John Randolph of Roanoke to Henry Grady, only three have been chosen for such brief treatment as the limits of this work impose—John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Henry Grady. Each is representative, it will be observed, of an attitude of mind and of a phase of current political thought—conservative, conciliatory, liberal. There were other noteworthy orators—John Randolph of Roanoke; Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, who debated with Webster; Thomas H. Benton of Missouri; Jefferson Davis of Mississippi; Alexander H. Stephens and Robert Toombs of Georgia. Most of these are remembered as statesmen rather than as orators, and their speeches are not widely

read to-day; this is true, indeed, of Calhoun and Clay; but the traditional renown of these two orators is so great that the literary historian must needs take their speeches into account.

John Caldwell Calhoun (1782-1850).—John C. Calhoun was born in South Carolina, educated at Yale, studied law, entered politics, and served in the legislature, as representative in Congress, as Senator, as Vice-President, as Secretary of War, and as Secretary of State. He was an active participant in the stirring senatorial debates between 1830 and 1850, defending State rights as a strict constructionist of the Constitution.

JOHN C. CALHOUN

He loved the Union, and believed that only through his interpretation of the Constitution could it be kept intact and the rights of the South at the same time secured. "He undertook," says Professor Trent, "to do more than was humanly possible; but his efforts were so herculean that they demand admiration."[1] Calhoun's greatest speeches were in defense of his views on State rights; that delivered in 1833 on "The Force Bill and Nullification" is one of his ablest. In his later years he wrote "A Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States," which is regarded as one of his subtlest pieces of political logic.

Calhoun was a man of singular purity of life and ideals. As an orator he was dignified and impressive, clear and severely logical. On occasion he could be impassioned, but usually he was restrained, though intense, appealing to reason rather than to the emotions. He was resourceful and courageous,

[1] W. P. Trent: *Southern Writers*, p. 100.

but he was not a popular speaker; he was better in the Senate than on the hustings. He was too analytical, too intellectual, to arouse enthusiasm in the average audience. His speeches are fine examples of clear, logical exposition.

Henry Clay (1777-1852).—Henry Clay was born in Hanover county, Virginia, studied law at an early age, went west to Kentucky in 1797 and settled at Lexington, which was his home for the rest of his life. He soon came into prominence in politics, was appointed to fill out an unexpired term in the United States Senate, was elected to the lower house of Congress, of which he was made speaker, and was then sent to the Senate, where except for a term as Secretary of State under Adams and a brief period or two, he remained until his death. Notable speeches of Clay are the following: "On the Greek Revolution" (1824), "Defense of the American System" (1832), "Compromise of 1850," and the "Farewell to the Senate." The famous compromise speech of 1850 closes with an impassioned plea for the Union; his two great colleagues, Webster and Calhoun, also ardently wished for its preservation; fortunately, no one of the mighty "triumvirate" lived to see it broken.

In the "golden age of American oratory" Henry Clay was the idol of the people. His personal magnetism and his brilliant oratorical powers won for him an immense following; his winsome, courtly manners disarmed enemies and often converted them into admirers. He must have been an irresistible speaker, though his speeches are now seldom read; verily the orator has his reward in the praises of his own generation. He was a patriot, and posterity will not forget his services, futile though his efforts were to prevent the apparently inevitable strife; his compromise measures, urged upon Congress with splendid persistence, gave him the title of "the great pacificator." No other saying of his is so familiar as his assertion—"I would rather be right than be President." Clay's style is simple, clear, and forcible; he was gifted in the use of apt illustrations,

but his speeches lack literary finish and the close reasoning of Webster's and the severely intellectual quality of Calhoun's. In popular appeal he was masterful, but as literature Webster's orations have proved more enduring.

Henry Woodfin Grady (1850-1889).—Henry W. Grady was born in Athens, Georgia; he was educated at the University of Georgia and the University of Virginia; at the time of his death he was editor and part owner of the *Atlanta Constitution.* Through his editorials and his public addresses he did much to bring about a better understanding between the North and the South; belonging to a newer generation, loyal to the old and eager for a completer national reunion, he was a fitting spokesman for the New South. The speech that first brought him wide fame was "The New South," delivered before the New England Society of New York in 1886. This established his reputation; he had become the prophet of a new era and a power for unification in the nation; he had won the title of "national pacificator." Back at home he had already shown himself the public-spirited citizen, promoting by word and deed measures for the advancement of his city, state, and the South. He was accordingly in demand in various parts of the country. At the Dallas, Texas, fair in 1888 he made a notable address on "The South and her Problems"; in Boston his last great speech was heard in December, 1889.

HENRY W. GRADY

The untimely death of this rarely gifted man came as a shock to the South and the rest of the nation. So fine a spirit for public service, so eloquent an exponent of modern progress, so just an interpreter of the old order to the new, had not before appeared. On him seemed to have fallen the mantle of the "men of the mighty days." "He was, indeed," says Watterson, "the hope and expectancy of the young South, the one publicist of the New South, who, inheriting the spirit of the old, yet had realized the present and looked into the future with the eyes of a statesman and the heart of a prophet." His orations have attained a deserved popularity; his "New South" speech in particular has appealed to young people in school and college and is a favorite for declaiming. Because of its literary quality, its eminent truthfulness, its warmth of feeling, and its cordial fraternalism, this oration has become a classic.

PROSE FICTION

In the realm of story-telling, Southern writers have made and are making a significant contribution to American literature. This body of prose fiction is large, varied, and of excellent quality; the later group of story-tellers in particular have shown remarkable industry and decided originality. For the sake of convenience, Southern prose fiction may be divided into the following classes according to the subject matter of the stories: (1) The older romances of war, adventure, and colonial life, by Simms, Kennedy, and Cooke; (2) the Creoles of Louisiana, by Cable; (3) Negro folk-lore, by Harris and others; (4) the Tennessee mountaineer, by Miss Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock"); (5) the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky, by Allen; (6) Old Virginia, by Page and others. This classification is of course neither exhaustive nor clear-cut, but it will serve in a general way to indicate the main themes. The older writers, as elsewhere in America, were essentially romantic in the treatment of their material, while the later novelists are

naturally more realistic. The difference between the old and the new fashion in fiction—the change from the romance of sentiment and adventure to the novel of realism—is expressed in the resigned remark of John Esten Cooke, shortly before his death, about the new school of realists: "They see, as I do, that fiction should faithfully reflect life, and they obey the law, while I was born too soon, and am now too old to learn my trade anew."

Representatives of the several classes of Southern fiction may now be taken up in the order outlined above. Of the earlier group William Gilmore Simms is the most important; then come John Pendleton Kennedy and John Esten Cooke.

WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS (1806-1870)

His Life.—William Gilmore Simms was born in Charleston, South Carolina, April 17, 1806. His mother died when he was scarcely two years old, and his father, a merchant, through despondency at the death of his wife and two of his children and at business failures, left Charleston for a wandering life of adventure westward. The little boy was taken care of by his grandmother, who knew a great many stories of war and Indian fighting, with which she kindled the imagination of her precocious grandson. After five or six years at the indifferent public schools of the city, he was at the age of twelve apprenticed to a druggist; but clerking in a drug store did not appeal to the imaginative youth, and at eighteen he began the study of law. Shortly after this he made a visit to his father in the wilds of Mississippi, and on this journey had several perilous adventures and visited two tribes of Indians. Returning to Charleston, he married (1826), and the next year was admitted to the bar. After a year's practice, however, he definitely gave up law for literature, having meanwhile written some poetry and read widely in Scott and Byron and other English authors.

Simms's first editorial venture was not successful; his wife died in 1832; aristocratic Charleston gave the young poet scanty recognition. Somewhat discouraged, he went to Hingham, Massachusetts, and there published his first long poetic effort, *Atalantis, a Story of the Sea;* he also met William Cullen Bryant, who remained his friend the rest of his life. After a few months in the North, he returned to South Carolina, and in 1833 published his first prose romance, *Martin Faber*, which was followed

the next year by another. In 1835 *The Yemassee* appeared, and Simms's fame was established; his romances were exceedingly popular. That same year he married again; and thenceforth he made his home for most of the year at his father-in-law's country place, Woodlands, in Barnwell county, South Carolina. At Woodlands he did the best literary work of his life, and there he entertained his literary friends from the North and South in hospitable style. In Charleston he spent a few months each year, for he owned a house in the city. About him there a small coterie of congenial spirits gathered, most of them younger men who looked up to him as a sort of literary dictator; and indeed he had some of the characteristics of old Samuel Johnson presiding at "the club."

MONUMENT TO SIMMS
Charleston, S. C.

Simms was editor of one short-lived periodical after another, the most influential of which was the *Southern Quarterly Review*, and he contributed to others. He was indeed the first Southern author to make literature his main vocation; he made his living from his novels and not from magazine articles, for which the poverty-stricken proprietors promised more than they paid. Besides these literary labors, Simms dabbled in politics, but went no higher than the state legislature. The war came on, and the novelist suffered; his home, Woodlands, was partly burned in 1862, and entirely destroyed in 1865, including his fine library. He lost his wife in 1863, and a number of his children had died through the years; so that when the war was over, he was a saddened and broken old man. He felt, too, that his native city had never smiled on his labors; her aristocratic indifference was galling to him. Still, he took up bravely the burden of life and heroically worked at more romances; but the

times had changed, and the public wanted another kind of fiction. Death overtook him at his task, June 11, 1870, the victim of overwork. He is buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston.

His Personality.—Simms was a man of vigorous, buoyant, sanguine temperament. He had a big heart and such abounding vitality that he drew around him many admirers and an inner circle of friends. He appealed to young men by his physical and moral energy and by his intellectual restlessness; he was essentially a masculine nature; he had the creative force without the delicate sensibilities and the patience of a great artist. He was capable of an immense amount of work, and his versatility was astonishing. In spite of his dogmatic manner, he was really a lovable man. He must have impressed those who knew him well both by his strength of character and his nobility of nature; he was strong in opinions and warm of heart, and to struggling young men and the deserving poor his sympathy went out in helpful service. As hospitable host at Woodlands and as center of his literary group at Charleston, to which Hayne and Timrod belonged, he is typical of the intellectual culture of the old South, "self-made man" though he was. To his friend, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Simms's whole life seemed noble "because of the 'grit,' the perseverance, the indomitable energy which it displayed"[1] under adverse conditions.

His Works.—Simms began his literary career by writing verse, and throughout life he continued to write it; his poetry fills a good many volumes, but the one entitled *Atalantis: a Story of the Sea* (1832), is perhaps the most ambitious. One comes across passages of high merit in many of these poems, but as a whole they are not noteworthy, for Simms was not a genuine poet. His other works—dramas, criticism, biography, history, fiction—number over fifty volumes. It is only his fiction, however, that has given him permanent fame. His best romances are those which deal with colonial and Revolu-

[1]Trent's *Life of William Gilmore Simms*, p. 322.

tionary days in South Carolina: *The Yemassee* (1835), a story of Indian fights in earlier colonial times; *The Partisan* (1835), *Mellichampe* (1836), and *Katherine Walton* (1851), belonging to the years of the Revolution; *The Forayers* (1855), *Eutaw* (1856), *The Scout* (published in 1841 as *The Kinsmen*, but renamed *The Scout* in 1854), and *Woodcraft* (1852), in which the scenes are laid in the last years of the eighteenth century.

WOODLANDS
Home of Simms, Barnwell Co., S. C.

To these might be added *The Wigwam and Cabin*, short stories of pioneer and Indian life. Of all these *The Yemassee* is the most popular.

The Yemassee is a story of the Indian uprising in South Carolina in the early eighteenth century. The Yemassee Indians, who had grown hostile to the English, planned a general attack on the settlers in the southeastern part of the colony. Their chief, Sanutee, rallied the tribe and with the

help of the Spanish and certain pirates led the attack. After burning and plundering many dwellings, the Indians concentrated their forces on the blockhouse; the besieged, well-nigh exhausted after their long defense, were finally relieved by a party under the brave and gallant Governor Craven, who figures in the story as Captain Gabriel Harrison. There are many thrilling episodes—the capture of Harrison and his release from the Indian prison by Matiwan, the friendly wife of the chief, the charming of Bess Matthews by the rattlesnake, the rescue of the maiden from the pirate, the weird doom of the luckless young Indian Occonestoga; and there is the pleasing love-story of Bess and Harrison. The Indian chief is a striking figure, while the Indian woman Matiwan is the noblest of her kind in the romances of the forest. The account of the death of Occonestoga is a powerful piece of writing, and the attack on the blockhouse is told with fine cumulative effect. The action, despite certain tedious stretches of conventional comment by lesser characters, is well sustained.

This and the other romances of Indian adventure, together with the stories of Revolutionary times in the South, seem likely to keep Simms's name alive in coming generations. They treat of an important period of Southern history and they were written by a man who had an enthusiastic interest in his subject. He was a good story-teller, but he was a hasty writer, often careless in his English and in his plot-structure. These defects are also found in Cooper, with whom Simms is frequently compared. There can be no doubt that Simms profited by his reading of Cooper and Scott and that in certain instances, indeed, he is, as Professor Trent remarks, following them afar off—using the tricks of the trade, such as the prolonged suspense, the appearance of the rescuer in the nick of time, the swoonings, the dull despair, the hidden paths, the tortures, the final triumph. But he was not an imitator; he has his own distinctive merits. His stories move along more rapidly than Cooper's, and his Indians are more real, though

he has not created either a Leatherstocking or a Chingachgook. His women are truer to life than Cooper's pale, languishing, ineffectual "females"; Simms's women not only fight on occasion, but they show in general more spirit and more of the qualities of genuine comradeship.

What Cooper did for his section, Simms did for the South. With broader culture and more sentiment, he had less of genius than his older Northern contemporary; but one might well put *The Yemassee* and *The Partisan* by the side of *The Last of the Mohicans* and *The Spy* as faithful pictures of interesting periods of American history. In reproducing for later generations the romance of the Indian-peopled woods, Simms not only rendered notable service to our literature, but to local history as well. Those who wish to know the spirit of those vanished times, when the early nation-builders felled the forests and pushed back the savage-haunted frontier, will find it in his books. Young people will continue to read them for the thrilling encounters, the "hairbreadth escapes in the imminent deadly breach," and the silvery thread of love that winds through the dark and blood-stained web of the story; older men and women, who would revive the imaginative freshness of their youth, will turn again these pages in which are told the happenings of more primitive days, before the coming of the complex modern novel with its vexing problems.

John Pendleton Kennedy (1795-1870).—John Pendleton Kennedy was born in Baltimore, educated in that city, studied law, fought in the War of 1812, served in the Maryland legislature, was for two terms a member of Congress, Secretary of the Navy under Fillmore, and one of the founders and trustees of the Peabody Institute of his native city. He died in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1870. In addition to the activities just mentioned, Kennedy was connected with several magazines and helped to promote the expeditions of Commodore Perry and Dr. Kane. As is true of many other writers, he loved literature more than the law and gave much time and energy

to the promotion of letters. He will doubtless be remembered for his generous encouragement of Poe as a struggling author in Baltimore, even when his own books are no longer widely read. He also had a brief association with another great writer, Thackeray, whom he met in England. Thackeray liked Kennedy and his stories of old Southern life, and asked him to write a chapter for his novel, *The Virginians;* the fourth chapter of the second volume of that book is said to have been written by Kennedy, but this is not certain. At any rate, the localities therein described were quite familiar to him.

JOHN P. KENNEDY

Kennedy's three stories are *Swallow Barn* (1832), a romance of old Virginia; *Horse-Shoe Robinson* (1835), a Revolutionary story; and *Rob of the Bowl* (1838), a romance of colonial Maryland. Of these the first two have come to be regarded as the best. *Swallow Barn* is a story of an old Virginia home on the James River in the early years of the nineteenth century. Here the lord of the manor, country gentleman and justice of the peace, dispenses a lavish hospitality, keeps fine horses and dogs, has a big retinue of servants, talks politics, and reads standard literature. It is hardly necessary to remark that this literature is of the eighteenth-century English type. Addison, Steele, and Fielding are certainly in the library; and this Southern country 'squire is a sort of Sir Roger de Coverley. *Swallow Barn* is a delightful picture of ante-bellum plantation life. *Horse-Shoe Robinson* is a romance of the Revolution in the South, in which the hero of the story, personally known to Kennedy,

figures in many thrilling incidents. An agreeable love-story, with its ups and downs, its faithful and resourceful heroine and her impeded lover, flavors the war narrative with gentler sentiment. The book ends with a description of the battle of King's Mountain, in which the threads of the story are dramatically brought together, forming an effective climax. *Horse-Shoe Robinson* is certainly one of the best romances of the Revolution in American literature. Among the other writings of Kennedy the best is probably his *Life of William Wirt* (1849).

John Esten Cooke (1830-1886).—John Esten Cooke was born at Winchester, Virginia, spent some years in Richmond, studied law with his father, a distinguished jurist, but soon gave himself to literature. He entered the Confederate army, served under Stuart as captain in the cavalry, and was in most of the battles fought by the army of Northern Virginia. When the war was over, he returned to literature and the quiet life he greatly loved. He was not the only member of the family with literary gifts, for his brother, Philip Pendleton Cooke wrote romances and at least one famous poem, already mentioned, "Florence Vane." The career of John Esten Cooke was an honorable one and his devotion to letters singularly steadfast.

JOHN ESTEN COOKE

His romances fall into two groups—those on Colonial and Revolutionary times and those relating to the great conflict of 1861-'65. To the first group belong *The Virginia Comedians* (1854), *Leatherstockings and Silk* (1854), *The Youth*

of Jefferson (1854), *The Last of the Foresters* (1856), *Fairfax* (1868), *Doctor Vandyke* (1872), *Henry St. John* (1859), and *Canolles* (1877); and to the second, *Surrey of Eagle's Nest* (1866), *Mohun* (1868), *Hilt to Hilt* (1868), and others. Of all these works *The Virginia Comedians* is generally considered the best; it still retains among lovers of old-fashioned books a deserved popularity. The scene of the story is Williamsburg —the colonial capital of Virginia—and its vicinity in the years immediately preceding the Revolution. The central figures are Champ Effingham, scion of Cavalier stock, who lives at Effingham Hall, and Beatrice Hallam, the beautiful young actress of "The Virginia Comedians," then playing at the little colonial capital. Ardent love-making, duels, balls and high-born dames, chariots and brocades, parsons and 'squires, and at last everybody happily mated with proper social sanction—so runs this romance of "the good old times." The ladies are "dazzlingly beautiful" and the men unimpeachably brave. The book is full of action and bright talk, but the plot is not well sustained throughout, though the story is an interesting picture of what "the golden days" are popularly supposed to have been. One American critic calls it "the best novel written in the Southern States before the Civil War."[1]

The war stories of Cooke—*Surrey of Eagle's Nest, Hilt to Hilt,* and the rest,—abound in stirring action, relieved by miniature sketches of Confederate heroes who played a conspicuous part in the cause which the author served with so much distinction. These works were rapidly written in a more highly-colored style than this generation likes, but they are the best war-stories of the time, and will doubtless continue to be read by young people, to whom the dramatic element of the mighty struggle specially appeals. Graphic portraits of great military captains, as drawn by one who knew them in action, are valuable.

[1]Charles F. Richardson: *American Literature*, vol. II, p. 401.

Cooke's avowed purpose was "to paint the Virginia phase of American society, to do for the Old Dominion what Cooper has done for the Indians, Simms for the Revolutionary drama in South Carolina, Irving for the Dutch Knickerbockers, and Hawthorne for the weird Puritan life of New England." This is an ambitious program for one man to undertake, but in certain aspects of it Cooke undoubtedly succeeded. Besides his romances, he wrote a *Life of Stonewall Jackson* and a *History of Virginia* (1883) in the Colonial and Revolutionary periods for the "American Commonwealths" series.

In his later years Cooke frankly acknowledged, with characteristic liberality of spirit, that the new school of realists had crowded him out of popular regard as a novelist; he did not complain, but accepted the change as the natural result of the law of advance in human society. Along with his contemporaries, Simms and Kennedy, he painted the life and set forth the ideals of the oldest South, and in so doing deserves with them a high meed of praise. The future historian will find preserved in the romances of these three men much of the spirit of the generations that wrought the foundations of the Republic; their books constitute a noble and a significant heritage. These writers were romanticists; they invested their themes with the colored garment of idealism; in a sense they were prophets, in whom—to paraphrase a dictum of George Eliot in another connection—'finest hope was finest memory.' The times have changed; romance and sentiment, though ever present in human nature, have in prose fiction been outwardly modified by the more practical philosophy of the realist. The new race of Southern writers are not out-and-out realists; they are still true to the genius of the section whence they sprang. At heart they are romanticists.

Belonging to this older group of writers who have done much to preserve for the younger generation the atmosphere of the ante-bellum South is GEORGE W. BAGBY (1828-1883), of Rich-

mond, editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Dr. Bagby was a humorist who wrote under the penname of "Mozis Addums." His sketches of provincial scenes and characters are diverting; one production of his, "Jud Brownin's Account of Rubinstein's Playing," or "How Ruby Played," has become a classic piece of American humor.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE (1844—)

His Life.—George W. Cable was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 12, 1844, of Virginia descent. At fourteen he left school to become a clerk in a mercantile house; this was made necessary by his father's business failure a number of years before. He entered the Confederate army in 1863 and served two years in a Mississippi regiment. After the war he was for some years a surveyor, but gave up that vocation to take a position on the New Orleans *Picayune*, for which he had already been writing sketches. Newspaper reporting was, however, not entirely to his taste, and he next tried keeping accounts in a cotton factor's office. At night and early in the morning he found time to write stories for *Scribner's Magazine*. In 1879 he decided to devote himself to literature as a profession.

GEORGE W. CABLE

That same year he collected his stories and published them under the title of *Old Creole Days*. These sketches had a wide reading, and their popularity encouraged Cable to attempt a series of novels on old Creole life in New Orleans, which will presently be noticed. Locally these books were criticised in regard to the faithfulness of their portrayal of scenes and persons, but elsewhere they won high praise for freshness of theme and fine literary quality. In 1885 Cable went to Connecticut to

live, and the following year removed to Northampton, Massachusetts, his present home. During the next five or six years he wrote several books on the negro question and kindred subjects which gave offense to many in his native region. Becoming interested in philanthropic enterprises, he has given much time and energy to the promotion of societies for social betterment; in 1887 he founded the Home Culture Clubs. In addition to the writing of books, he has lectured on literary and philanthropic subjects and has given readings from his own stories. His interest in moral and religious questions has always been deep. After a long silence, he published from 1894 to within recent years several novels which have been widely read.

His Works.—The works which made Cable famous and which will in all likelihood be longest read are those that deal with Creole life in old New Orleans. Although he has written other novels of merit, it will be best for our present purpose to enumerate only those written between 1879 and 1888: *Old Creole Days* (1879), *The Grandissimes* (1880), *Madame Delphine* (1881), *Dr. Sevier* (1883), and *Bonaventure* (1888).

Old Creole Days is a collection of short stories on that quaint and fascinating people in Louisiana who gave to that part of the South a hundred years ago a peculiar charm. Much of the picturesque setting which lends an atmosphere of enchantment to these stories has of course vanished from the New Orleans of to-day, but the poetic dialect, the broken English, and the engaging manners of the Creoles of the older time are preserved in these miniature romances. It makes little difference whether it is all true to life or not; in literature one looks for the spirit of a time and place, not for historical accuracy. These stories reconstruct for the imagination that rich and colored Southern life, with its balmy airs, its nights full of the sweetness of jasmine-flowers and orange blossoms, its old-world architecture, its dreamy atmosphere as of a western land of lotus-eaters, its chivalry of high-souled men and beautiful women. The men and women in *Old Creole Days* move about in a sort of detached world, where sentiment is more than common sense and where human life takes on the

grace and mild excitement of refined drama. The characters live in the open, and instinctively they are actors; sometimes it is a comedy, sometimes it is a tragedy, oftener it is gently serio-comic, and not without its moral lesson.

The longest story in *Old Creole Days* is "Madame Delphine" (originally published as a separate volume). The central figure is the quadroon mother who for the sake of her beautiful daughter sacrifices herself; but more impressive than all the other figures in this moving little drama is Père Jerome, the priest whose sermons in the little old cathedral and whose ministrations in his parish had made him the friend and helper of rich and poor. Descriptive passages of singular beauty add poetic charm to the setting. Here is one:

> It was one of those southern nights under whose spell all the sterner energies of the mind cloak themselves and lie down in bivouac, and the fancy and the imagination, that cannot sleep, slip their fetters and escape, beckoned away from behind every flowering bush and sweet-smelling tree, and every stretch of lonely, half-lighted walk, by the genius of poetry. The air stirred softly now and then, and was still again, as if the breezes lifted their expectant pinions and lowered them once more, awaiting the rising of the moon in a silence which fell upon the fields, the roads, the gardens, the walls, and the suburban and half-suburban streets, like a pause in worship. And anon she rose . . . In the dark boughs of a large orange-tree a mocking-bird began the first low flute-notes of his all-night song. It might have been only the nearness of the songster that attracted the passer's attention, but he paused and looked up. And then he remarked something more—that the air where he had stopped was filled with the overpowering sweetness of the night-jasmine.

In this volume of short stories perhaps there is no more popular one than "Posson Jone." It is an altogether delightful account of how a big, simple-hearted West Florida parson went to New Orleans and fell into the hands of gamblers, but "by the light of the Christian virtue that shone from him even in his great fall" brought about, without knowing it, the return to an honest life of those who had led him into temptation.

The little incident is told with delicious humor and exquisite coloring. Not many startling things happen in these stories or sketches; there is a hint here, a suggestion there, a glimpse into character, some conversation, and at the end an artistically arranged climax of a minor kind, revealing a new phase of character. "Madame Délicieuse," for instance, is the story of the influence of a charming young widow on a proud old military man in reconciling him to his son, a young scientist of growing reputation from whom he was estranged; the romance of the situation is revealed at the end:

> The sky was blue, the air was soft and balmy, and on the sweet south breeze, to which the old General bared his grateful brow, floated a ravishing odor of—
>
> "Ah! what is it?" the veteran asked of the younger pair, seeing the little aunt glance at them with a playful smile.
>
> Madame Délicieuse, for almost the first time in her life, and Dr. Mossy for the thousandth—blushed.
>
> It was the odor of orange blossoms.

Of the novels *The Grandissimes* is usually considered the best. The center of this elaborate and powerful story is Honoré Grandissime, against whose progressive ideas and plans the rest of the family of the Grandissimes contend, only to be borne along by the far-seeing hero to the prosperity of which he has all along had a prophetic vision. About him various types of people move—the reactionary, the feline quadroon beauty, the shrewish negress, the former African chief fighting against enslavement, the Congo woman, and the two winsome Creoles. Realism is mingled with idealism, sentiment with plain prosaic fact, subtle humor with delicate pathos. In this book as in the others, whether the writer is dealing with aristocrats of antique lineage or with peasants, there is a shining thread of idealism and ethical significance.

It is in the short stories, however, that Cable's art is seen at its best; they are his masterpieces. One may turn again and again to *Old Creole Days* and find refreshment in their setting,

dramatic situations, and general refinement of tone. Not elsewhere has the charm of Creole civilization been so well caught and preserved. In Cable's books we accordingly find a real contribution to American literature. The local color of a picturesque section of old American life—the streets and buildings of historic New Orleans, the forests, bayous, and streams of Louisiana,—will live in these artistic romances.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848-1908)

His Life.—Joel Chandler Harris was born at Eatonton, Georgia, December 8, 1848. After attending for a while the local schools, he was at the age of twelve employed on a country newspaper as type-setter; thus he learned the printer's trade. For this paper he also contributed his first articles. In the home of his employer he found to his delight a large library, of which he made steady use. After the war he did newspaper work in Macon, Georgia, and in New Orleans; then he edited *The Advertiser* of Forsyth, Georgia, and also practised law for a time there. Between 1871 and 1876 he was on the staff of the Savannah *Daily News*. In 1876 he became one of the editors of the *Atlanta Constitution*, and remained with that paper for a quarter of a century. Through his contributions to its columns he became famous.

From his childhood Harris, who laughingly called himself "an uncultured Georgia cracker," was a lover of old plantation life; he hunted possums, coons, and rabbits, and listened to the darkies as they played the banjo and sang their melodies and told their animal stories. Later on, when he began to record these fables, his knowledge of negro character stood him in good stead. He was able to interest the negroes in a story and draw from them in turn stories which a less sympathetic person would have failed to get, for the old-time darky was slow to tell his folk-tales to strangers. Harris had a way of winning their confidence; and so he gathered an immense fund of stories.

Personally, Joel Chandler Harris was shy and reticent except to those who had common interests and feelings. To such visitors at his suburban home, Wren's Nest, he talked freely with unfailing humor and good nature. Humor and sympathy were predominant traits. Simple tastes and a delight in sincere people and unaffected manners marked his daily life: "I like people," said he, "who are what they are, and are not all the time trying to be what somebody else has been." He was happiest in his little rural retreat, surrounded by his family, his bird friends, his animal pets, and tending with affectionate care his rose-garden. About a year before his death in 1908, he founded *Uncle Remus's Magazine*.

The "Uncle Remus" Stories.—The writings of Joel Chandler Harris naturally fall into two classes—those on negro folk-lore and those on the Georgia "crackers" and "moonshiners." In this brief sketch it will make for unity and general effectiveness to confine the discussion to the first class, the "Uncle Remus" stories, which have brought the author enduring fame. The volumes of this group are: *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings* (1880), *Nights with Uncle Remus* (1883), *Uncle Remus and His Friends* (1892), and a later volume, *Told by Uncle Remus* (1905), in which the old negro is represented as telling his stories to the son of the original "little boy" in the first tales.

In the first volume of stories, collected from the issues of the *Atlanta Constitution* for several years, Harris revealed an unexpected wealth of negro folk-lore. It is true that Irwin Russell had already discovered this realm, but it remained for his Georgia contemporary to bring it into universal recognition. Uncle Remus is the unique creation of Joel Chandler Harris. This venerable personage has an astonishingly large fund of information about the sayings and doings of Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, Brer B'ar, Brer Wolf, and the rest of the human animals. Uncle Remus also knows a lot about child nature: he knows how to arouse the little boy's curiosity at the right moment and how to quell his fears, for he is keenly conscious of every turn of thought and feeling in his hearer. And when the story wanders too far afield among the animals, he knows how to bring it back into human regions at the right moment by mentioning "Miss Sally" or "Miss Meadows en de gals." The scene in the negro cabin in the flickering firelight, the spectacled old darky, "Aunt Tempy," the eager little listener upon whose intent features the shadows and lights alternately play, while to the fancy that invisible world, wherein Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox contend for the mastery, is the real one after all,—these pictures live in the memory of those who read the Uncle Remus stories; and to those who perchance have had

the good fortune in their childhood to hear from dusky lips the weird tales, the reading of them here brings an enchanting renewal of "the dear remembered days."

Uncle Remus is not only a type, but an individual; he is the real negro philosopher and humorist of the plantation, not an idealized one. His prototype was an old man on the Turner plantation in Georgia where Harris spent his early years and whose stories he had heard. There had been numerous darky songs and a few noteworthy negro characters in literature before Uncle Remus, but most of these, as Professor C. Alphonso Smith well points out,[1] had been more typical than individual; that is, they had portrayed the negro as a representative of his class in his relation to the white man and not as a distinct personality voicing his sentiments in his own cabin. These animal legends he had inherited from a remote, twilight past, and when he talked them out himself he stood for his race with its accumulation of primitive lore. In the mouth of Uncle Remus, as Harris puts him before us, we have the genuine folk-tales of the negro; these stories form therefore a unique and exceedingly valuable contribution to American literature. Uncle

BRER FOX AND BRER RABBIT[2]
From an original illustration in *Uncle Remus and his Friends*

[1] *Die Amerikanische Literatur*, pp. 296 *et seq.*

[2] Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

Remus is one of the few distinctly original characters of our national literature; and as the old plantation life recedes more and more into the past, these dialect folk tales of which he is the central figure will prove a valuable heritage to a newer time from a richly picturesque period of Southern history. Interesting as they are simply for the story and the setting, they have, when looked at more deeply, something of moral significance not unlike that of simple allegory. This is confirmed by the author's remark that it is not difficult to find out why the negro "selects as his hero the weakest and most harmless of animals, and brings him out victorious in contests with the bear, the wolf, and the fox: it is not virtue that triumphs, but helplessness; it is not malice, but mischievousness."

Irwin Russell (1853-1879).—Irwin Russell was born in Port Gibson, Mississippi, educated at St. Louis University, studied law and began the practice of it in Mississippi; but being a man of versatile talents and erratic disposition, he neglected the law for newspaper work, music, and literature. His short, pathetic life of twenty-six years ended in New Orleans, where he was connected with *The Times*. Russell early perceived the literary possibilities of the negro dialect, and he is chiefly remembered to-day as the pioneer in that sort of writing, the immediate predecessor of Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page. His best-known poem is "Christmas Night in the Quarters" (1878). Another popular piece is "Nebuchadnezzar," in which are related a darky's struggles with a mule. Russell was an ardent admirer of Robert Burns and could write very like the Scotch poet. While he wrote a few serious poems of merit, it is his delineation of negro character that will preserve his name; in this he opened a rich new field. Russell was a clever caricaturist and imitator, and was able to sketch faces and scenes with telling effect and to reproduce the styles of various poets. The slender volume of his poems was published in 1888.

MARY NOAILLES MURFREE (1850—)

(Charles Egbert Craddock)

Her Life.—Mary Noailles Murfree was born near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, January 24, 1850, in the old house later celebrated in her novel, *Where the Battle was Fought*. She came of good North Carolina Revolutionary stock; her father was a successful lawyer of Nashville. In that city and in Philadelphia she was educated. Being lame from her childhood, she could not take part in the usual outdoor sports; she therefore turned to reading fiction for her recreation and fed her imagination on the novels of Scott and George Eliot. For fifteen successive summers the family spent several months in the mountains of East Tennessee, and thus Miss Murfree had abundant opportunity to study the mountaineer at close range in his native fastnesses. In the seventies she had begun writing stories for *Appleton's Journal* under the pen-name of "Charles Egbert Craddock" and by 1878 she was contributing to the *Atlantic Monthly*. For a number of years after the war the Murfree family lived in St. Louis, returning in 1890 to Murfreesboro, which has since been the novelist's home.

MARY N. MURFREE
(Charles Egbert Craddock)

Miss Murfree is probably better known as Charles Egbert Craddock; in her earlier efforts she chose thus to disguise her identity because she believed that a man's name would have greater weight with readers and publishers and that, moreover, it might prove a convenient cloak for possible failure. Her attempt at concealment succeeded, for even after it became known that Charles Egbert Craddock was M. N. Murfree, she was still supposed to be a man. To this impression her vigorous style, her extensive knowledge of mountain life, and her masculine hand-writing doubtless contributed. Probably the greatest surprise the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, ever had was on that March morning in 1885 when he stepped into his office and found there a rather small and very refined looking woman who introduced

herself as Charles Egbert Craddock. For years he and his predecessor, William Dean Howells, had been addressing their letters to Charles Egbert Craddock, Esq., or to M. N. Murfree, Esq. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes is reported to have exclaimed after meeting the rising young novelist: "What do you think? Charles Egbert Craddock is below and *he's a woman!*"

Her Works.—The first volume of Miss Murfree's stories, *In the Tennessee Mountains,* appeared in 1884. This volume contains eight stories on the life and character of the Tennessee mountaineer—the feuds, the fights, the court sessions, the raids on the moonshiners, neighborhood dances, the love-makings, the lights and shadows of the daily round of an isolated people, shut in by everlasting barriers. There is the somber background of the valley and the sentinel mountain, and over against them there is the belated Anglo-Saxon folk, as picturesque as the encompassing scenery of which they form an integral part. Among them one may find a high sense of honor, despite their lawlessness and general fondness for settling disputes with rifles and pistols. Endurance and sacrifice are not infrequent virtues; from them spring cases of real heroism among this high-spirited people.

In the story called "Drifting Down Lost Creek" the heroine, Cynthia Ware, is a tragic figure in her patient sacrifice for her unfaithful lover, for whose release from prison she has labored. Somehow her disappointed life seemed to find its symbol in the loneliness of the mountain tinged with the fading splendors of an autumn sunset:

The sun had gone down, but the light yet lingered. The evening star trembled above Pine Mountain. Massive and darkling it stood against the red west. How far, ah, how far, stretched that mellow crimson glow, all adown Lost Creek Valley, and over the vast mountain solitudes on either hand! Even the eastern ranges were rich with this legacy of the dead and gone day, and purple and splendid they lay beneath the rising moon. She looked at it with full and shining eyes. "I dunno how he kin make out ter furgit the mountings," she said; and then she went on, hearing the crisp leaves rustling beneath her tread.

He might forget her, but how could he forget the mountains? At last her resignation triumphs, but not without that touch of fatalism which is a part of the mountaineer's religion:

> Sometimes, to be sure, it seems to her that the years of her life are like the floating leaves drifting down Lost Creek, valueless and purposeless, and vaguely vanishing in the mountains. Then she remembers that the sequestered subterranean current is charged with its own inscrutable imperative mission, and she ceases to question and regret, and bravely does the work nearest her hand, and has glimpses of its influence in the widening lives of others, and finds in these a placid content.

That passage might have been written by George Eliot, so full is it of self-abnegation and the pathos of buried hopes.

Throughout the stories there are touches that show keen insight into the habits and talk of the mountaineer; as, for instance, the pungent remarks of Old Mis' Cayce on the good old times at the settlement:

> "I 'member when I war a gal whisky war so cheap that up to the store at the settlemint they'd hav a bucket set full o' whisky an' a gourd, free fur all comers, an' another bucket alongside with water ter season it. An' the way that thar water lasted war surprising'; that it war!"

The pithy comment of the old constable on Clem Sanders's spelling is interesting:

> "Sech spellin' as Clem Sanders kin do oughter be agin the law! It air agin every law o' spellin'. Clem ought to be hung a leetle fur each offense. It jes' fixes him in his criminal conduct agin the alphabet."

Among the numerous novels that Miss Murfree has written, those on the mountain folk are the best—*The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains* (1885), *In the Clouds* (1886), *Down the Ravine* (1885), *The Despot of Broomsedge Cove* (1888), *In the Stranger Peoples' Country* (1891). She has written on other scenes and other people, but she has not delineated them with the same sure hand that depicted the life of the East Tennessee

mountaineer. This hidden region she discovered for literature, and therein lies her claim to lasting recognition. Past these people, caught as it were in an eddy, the hurrying stream of civilization had swept on; they preserved much of the older speech, many of the older habits of thought. We call them primitive, but that is only a relative way of speaking: their dialect, though a corrupt form, retains familiar old idioms and pronunciations; their songs and ballads are survivals of a transplanted English civilization of three centuries ago; these picturesque folk are "our contemporary ancestors in the Southern mountains."

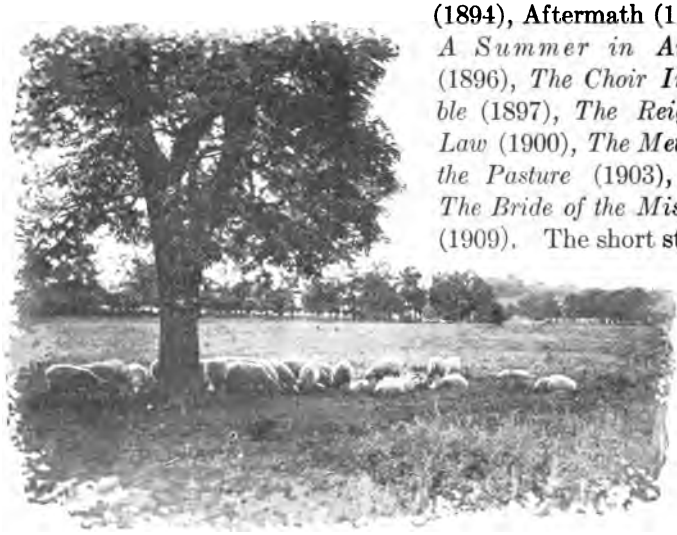
At the fortunate moment Charles Egbert Craddock found and portrayed this unchanged people in a kind of folk-epic. In the best of her books she has artistically harmonized the grandeur and vastness of the mountains, with their ineffable poetry of form and color, with the isolated lives of those provincial men and women into an impressive picture. She has therefore rendered a distinctive service to American literature in this unique contribution. As more and more before the oncoming tide of education the mountain type is modified into dull uniformity, Miss Murfree's books, like Cable's on the Creoles and Harris's on the negro, will be valued for the light they throw on an interesting phase of the nation's social history.

JAMES LANE ALLEN (1849—)

His Life.—James Lane Allen was born near Lexington, Kentucky, in 1849, and was brought up amid the scenes he afterwards described in his stories. In 1872 he graduated at Transylvania University, Lexington. For a number of years he taught school in Kentucky and Missouri, returning to his alma mater as instructor; he resigned there to become professor of Latin in Bethany College, West Virginia, holding that position two years (1882-'84). By this time he had resolved to make literature his profession; he accordingly settled in New York, after living for a short time in Cincinnati and Washington, in order to be near the periodicals for which he had begun to contribute. His first produc-

tions were essays and sketches, and then he passed to story-writing for *Harper's Magazine* and the *Century*. His stories were idealized narratives and descriptions of life in the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky, which he knew so intimately. These were followed by several novels which established his reputation as one of the foremost contemporary writers of prose fiction.

His Works.—Allen's first volume of stories, *Flute and Violin*, was published in 1891; then followed *A Kentucky Cardinal* (1894), Aftermath (1895), *A Summer in Arcady* (1896), *The Choir Invisible* (1897), *The Reign of Law* (1900), *The Mettle of the Pasture* (1903), and *The Bride of the Mistletoe* (1909). The short stories



Bradley—Georgetown, Ky.
SCENE IN THE BLUE-GRASS REGION
Kentucky

in the first volume and the prose idyl, *A Kentucky Cardinal*, are probably the most popular of his works, while *The Choir Invisible* is his strongest novel.

The scene of Allen's stories, long and short, is the wonderfully beautiful Blue-Grass Region of Kentucky around Lexington, where he spent his most impressionable years. The rich pastures, with their clumps of shade trees and grazing cattle

and blooded horses; the limpid streams winding through the meadows; the fragrant clover-fields of early summer and the hazy hemp fields of autumn; the luxuriant cornfields and the waving stretches of golden wheat in June; the white roads, or "pikes," across the rolling landscape, forming a network of communication; the old stone fences guarding the highway, English fashion: all these outward features, together with the full, free life, of that enchanting spot, are ideally portrayed in this Kentuckian's books. Here is a bit of poetic coloring:

> They are all mine—these Kentucky wheat fields. After the owner has taken from them his last sheaf, I come in and gather my harvest also—one that he did not see, and doubtless would not begrudge me—the harvest of beauty. Or I walk beside tufted aromatic hemp-fields, as along the shores of softly foaming emerald seas; or part the rank and file of fields of Indian corn, which stand like armies that had gotten ready to march, but been kept waiting for further orders, until at last the soldiers had gotten tired, as the gayest will, of their yellow plumes and green ribbons, and let their big hands fall heavily down at their sides. There the white and the purple morning-glories hang their long festoons and open to the soft midnight winds their elfin trumpets.

The delightful novelettes, *A Kentucky Cardinal* and its sequel, *Aftermath*, are pastoral idyls, poems in prose: the singing and fate of the red bird, the wooing of the lovers, the ripening strawberries, give to this garden story, in which heart and mind are changed by love and nature, an atmosphere all its own. In *A Summer in Arcady* the high tide of summer suggests reflections on the subtle connection between the physical forces of nature and human instincts and passions, a sort of prelude to the perplexing problems raised in *The Reign of Law*. In human interest, however, such a story as "King Solomon of Kentucky," found in *Flute and Violin*, far surpasses all other shorter stories of James Lane Allen. The scene is in the Lexington of 1833, when the cholera left its ravages upon that fair town. The hitherto worthless vagabond, called in mockery "King Solomon," reaches the depths of his humilia-

tion on the public square when he is auctioned off to the highest bidder, but finds his redemption in a service of supreme heroism to the community in the dark days of the plague. It is one of the great short stories of American literature.

The Choir Invisible has great human interest also. It is a romantic tale of pioneer times in Kentucky, and it opens on a "fragrant afternoon of May" in the year 1795. The hero is John Gray, a country schoolteacher, who is no doubt in part drawn from the author himself. The real heroine is Mrs. Faulkner, a noble type of womanhood; between the two is sympathy of mind and heart. In the old book of Arthur and the Round Table, Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, they read, but love is unconfessed, and each obeys the higher law of duty, which is sometimes the hand of fate and tragedy. The fight with the panther in the schoolroom is a thrilling incident such as one seldom finds in Allen's works.

He is, indeed, preëminently a painter of quiet scenes and an analyst of inner motives. There is comparatively little action in his stories, and his plots are not complex. The restrained tragedy of certain situations, the humanness of a landscape, and the fateful determination of character, suggest Thomas Hardy, without, however, the general somberness of that novelist. Allen's landscapes are the smiling blue-grass pastures idealized and humanized, and his stories are prose idyls artistically done in choice musical English.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE (1853—)

His Life.—Thomas Nelson Page was born at Oakland Plantation in Hanover County, Virginia, in 1853. He was educated at Washington and Lee University, entering the institution during the presidency of General Robert E. Lee. After leaving college in 1872, he tutored for a while in a private family near Louisville, Kentucky. Then he entered the Law School of the University of Virginia, from which he graduated in 1874. Between 1875 and 1893 he practised law in Richmond. Meanwhile he had written many stories of old Virginia life and become famous. He was in demand as a lecturer and as a reader of his own stories, which

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

he interpreted with great success. Since 1893 Mr. Page has lived in Washington and has given himself entirely to literary work. In 1913 he was appointed Ambassador to Italy by President Wilson, who in so doing revived the fine old traditions of our earlier diplomacy when Irving, Hawthorne, and Lowell served their country abroad.

His Works.—Thomas Nelson Page began his literary career by writing stories and sketches for the newspapers, as did also Cable and Harris. His first great short story, "Marse Chan," was written in 1880, but was not published until 1884, when it appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, after remaining in the office of that periodical for four years. It was received with universal praise. Other stories followed in rapid succession; all were collected in a single volume, published in 1887 under the title of *In Ole Virginia*. Three of them have become classics—"Marse Chan," "Meh Lady," and "Unc' Edinburg's

Drowndin'." This volume, indeed, has held its place as the author's most popular and characteristic work. Other books, in the order of publication, are—*Two Little Confederates* (1888), *On New Found River* (1891), *Elsket and Other Stories* (1891), *The Old South* (1892), *Social Life in Old Virginia* (1897), *Red Rock* (1898), *Gordon Keith* (1903), a life of Robert E. Lee, and other volumes.

While Page has written dialect poems, essays, and biography, it is as a writer of stories on life in the South, or to be more specific, in Virginia, before and during the war and immediately thereafter, that he has won permanent fame. How they lived on the old plantations, how loyal the darkies were to their masters and mistresses in war time, and how Virginia suffered in the dark reconstruction days,—these are the themes on which he is most at home. No one is better fitted to write on this general subject than Thomas Nelson Page, descendant of an old and distinguished Virginia family, whose traditions touch much that is best in the political, intellectual, and social history of the Old Dominion. With the scenes he describes, some of which center about his native plantation home, he was familiar in one way or another, and from his boyhood he was an entertaining story-teller. With irresistible pathos and humor he has depicted the negro of slave days in his relation to his master; he has shown in artistic fashion the kindly feeling, amounting often to active sympathy, between them; and he has shown the heroism of servant and master and mistress in those times that tried men's souls.

These charming stories, of which "Marse Chan" and "Meh Lady" are typical, are usually told by a faithful negro whose affections for the family have not been changed by the new relationship. To him the days "befo de war" were the golden days; and when the struggle, the inevitable conflict, came, he also turned out to be a hero through his unfaltering devotion to "Marse Chan" or to "Marse Phil" and his family. Pathos and humor are close together in the pictures of the old order; the

welling tear is arrested by the faint smile. At the end of "Meh Lady" the old negro, Uncle Billy, sitting at his door in the moonlight dreamily smoking, has a vision of the dear dead days, in the telling of which there is an exquisite union of quaint, heartfelt pathos and gentle humor, but the pathos prevails. The moonlight, in truth, is over all that poetic past, the moonlight of memory, very much as it is over the fairylands of childhood. As Page sees that old civilization, it was "the sweetest, purest, and most beautiful ever lived."

This sentiment finds delightful expression in *Red Rock*, the preface to which prepares us for the romantic treatment of the material, so artistically done, indeed, as to seem quite realistic. But through it all we are made to feel that with the passing of the old régime in Virginia there vanished from the earth a glory as hopeless of recovery as a lost Pleiad. "Even the moonlight was richer and mellower before the war than it is now." Dr. Cary in *Red Rock* is a noble figure, one of the finest in our fiction, heroic in his life of service. The old community lives again, as we read this delineation of men and women bravely taking up their burdens after the war. And the book ends in hope; the spirit of reconciliation between the sundered sections is manifest; the prophecy of a new nationalism is there.

It has been the province of Thomas Nelson Page to reconstruct aristocratic Virginia at the end of the golden age. Upon the whole he has done this more pleasingly in his short stories than in his novels. He has been particularly successful in portraying the Virginia woman of war times, the heroine of the home who learned to minister also to those on the battle field and to endure with serene courage the discomforts of poverty. In his dealing with negro dialect he is as successful as Joel Chandler Harris and Irwin Russell; but, as has been pointed out, he is concerned with the negro only as "an accessory to the white man,"[1] while Harris and Russell have given him a separate existence through his folk-lore. Page's

[1] *Southern Writers*, Vol. II, p. 147: article by Mims.

contribution is a series of memorable pictures of the happy relations between master and man.

LATER WRITERS

The writers already considered are representative of literature in the South up to the end of the nineteenth century. The list is not an exhaustive one, for the limits of this work forbid an attempt at that; only those writers who, by virtue of some noteworthy contribution, have come to be regarded as standard, are discussed; even these are subject to a modification of values in the judgment of a later posterity. Few living writers, indeed, can assuredly boast themselves of tomorrow; in literature it is hard to tell what a decade may bring forth. Predictions are perilous, and "the whirligig of time brings in his revenges."

SIDNEY PORTER (O. HENRY)

There are a few writers of prose fiction who have become widely known since the closing years of the last century, and who within the last decade have strengthened their claims to permanent recognition. Brief mention of these in a concise history of American literature seems justified.

Of the later short-story writers, WILLIAM SIDNEY PORTER ("O. Henry") (1864-1910) has achieved widespread popularity. He was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, lived on a cattle ranch in Texas, did newspaper work in Houston and Austin,

spent a while in Central America, moved to New Orleans, and in 1902 settled in New York, where he was living at the time of his death. Of the nine or ten volumes of his short stories the best are probably *Cabbages and Kings* (1905), *The Four Million* (1906), *Heart of the West* (1907), and *The Voice of the City* (1908). *The Four Million* and *The Voice of the City* are short stories of life in New York City as Porter saw it on the streets and in the shops. These volumes probably contain his most enduring contribution. The chief characteristics of an "O. Henry" short story are humanness, compactness, and final dramatic surprise. He endeavored to depict the romance of the common human heart and the common human life. He said that he tried to show that "the innate propensity of human nature is to choose the good instead of the bad."

JOHN FOX (1863—) is a native of the Blue-Grass Region of Kentucky, who has written interesting short stories and novels of life in the Kentucky and Virginia mountains. He spent many years at Big Stone Gap, Virginia, which is still his summer home, among the people whom he describes, sustaining to that region something of the relation that Miss Murfree does to the Tennessee mountains. The best known of his works are *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine, A Cumberland Vendetta, The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come,* and *A Knight of the Cumberland.*

A reaction against realism is to be found in the earlier work of MARY JOHNSTON (1870—), of Virginia, whose *Prisoners of Hope, To Have and to Hold, Audrey,* and *Lewis Rand,* deal with the romantic period of old Virginia history. In these romances there is a revival of the historical novel in a modified form. Her two later works, *The Long Roll* (1910) and *Cease Firing* (1912), depict scenes and heroes of the Confederacy. Miss Johnston shows a remarkably extensive knowledge of the background of her novels and an unusual grasp on historical detail. Her later novels are more realistic than the earlier, the purpose being to portray with faithfulness some of the

great campaigns, battles, and leaders of the Southern side. This she does with vigor and vividness. These works form a sort of prose epic of that mighty struggle.

Another Virginia novelist, ELLEN GLASGOW (1874—), has chosen as the general theme of her most interesting novels the changing society of the South after the war and the consequent social readjustments. *The Deliverance*, *The Voice of the People*, *The Romance of a Plain Man*, and *The Miller of Old Church*, develop various phases of this theme in a striking way, but the main interest is in the puzzling question of unequal marriages. The inferior class of society under the old order, growing prosperous and enlightened, aspires to intermarriage with the descendants of the higher class. The gradual intermingling of the two social strata seems to typify, as in a kind of faint allegory, the triumph of democracy in the New South, which is to recruit itself from the ranks. These realistic novels, however one may interpret the complex social problems there presented, are thought-provoking. The themes are developed with clearness, courage, and well conceived art.

Among the other numerous present-day writers ALICE HEGAN RICE (1870—), of Kentucky, may be mentioned for her clever delineation in humorous and breezy fashion of simple, humble folk, for whose struggles she shows a sympathetic appreciation. Her most famous book is *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, which has been successfully dramatized. The widespread interest in forms of social service shows its influence in the work of HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON, who began his career as an editorial writer on the Richmond *Times-Dispatch*, and whose novels, *Queed* and *V. V.'s Eyes*, have won high praise for the strength and nobility of the characters portrayed and for the wholesomeness and ingenuity of the plots.

Other Southern Writers.—Other writers in the South since the war to whom brief notice must be given are: RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON (1822-1898), who was born and educated in Georgia but spent the last thirty years of his life in Baltimore and Washington. He was lawyer,

college professor (in the University of Georgia, 1857-'61), schoolmaster (in Baltimore), and at the time of his death was connected with the United States Bureau of Education. He is author of a number of volumes of stories, but his best work is the collection of *Dukesborough Tales* (1871), racy stories of Georgia country life around the village of Powelton, four miles from the author's birthplace. FRANCIS HOPKINSON SMITH (1838—), a native of Baltimore, has written one famous story of Southern life, *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* (1891). Literature is his avocation rather than his vocation, for he is civil engineer, painter, and lighthouse builder. AUGUSTA EVANS WILSON (1835-1909), was born in Georgia, but spent most of her life in Mobile, Alabama; she wrote a number of romances, of which *St. Elmo* is the best. Her books were once popular, but the stilted style and the pedantry do not greatly appeal to readers now. *St. Elmo* was once a "best seller" and, despite its unrealities of plot and character, still exerts a fascination on the romantic youthful mind. W. GORDON MCCABE (1841—), of Richmond, Virginia, has written fine poems of war time, the best known of which are "Dreaming in the Trenches," "Christmas Night of '62," and "Only a Memory." FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT (1849—) was born in England, but because she lived for a time in Tennessee she is sometimes classified as a Southern writer. Her most notable work is *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, though she has written other exceedingly popular stories, such, for instance, as *That Lass o'Lowrie's*. MARION HARLAND (Mrs. Mary V. Terhune) (1831—), though born in Virginia, has spent most of her life out of the South; her writing, however, has been largely on Southern life. Her stories, such as *Sunnybank*, *Judith*, and others, are bright and wholesome. Another writer connected with the South is GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON (1839-1912), brother of Edward Eggleston, the Indiana writer. Eggleston was born in Indiana, of Virginia ancestry; was educated at Depauw University and Richmond College, Virginia; served in the Confederate army; and spent most of his life in New York City as editor and author. He wrote a number of stories on old Southern life, several books of adventure for young people, and entertaining reminiscences of his own experiences as soldier and literary man. HARRY STILLWELL EDWARDS (1854—) of Macon, Georgia, has written entertaining stories and sketches of Southern life and character. GRACE ELIZABETH KING (1852—), of Louisiana, has made valuable contributions to local literature and history, especially on the Creoles and the early history of her native state. Among her works are *Monsieur Motte*, *Tales of Time and Place*, and *Balcony Stories*. RUTH MCENERY STUART (1856—), of Louisiana, is the author of many pleasing short stories of lowly life, including the negro, in the South. Her work is artistically and sympathetically done. She has been called "the laureate of the

lowly." Among others who have achieved success in story writing are KATHERINE SHERWOOD BONNER, of Mississippi; AMÉLIE RIVES (Princess Troubetskoy), of Virginia; WILL HARBEN, of Georgia; MOLLY ELLIOT SEAWELL and MRS. KATE LANGLEY BOSHER, of Virginia. GEORGE D. PRENTICE (1802-1870), a native of Connecticut, spent most of his life in Louisville, Kentucky, as editor of the *Louisville Journal*, now the *Courier-Journal;* he wrote a number of poems of somber sentiment, somewhat in the manner of Bryant, the best of which is "The Closing Year" in blank verse. JOHN HENRY BONER (1845-1903), a native of Salem, North Carolina, spent much of his life in Washington and New York in the government service and engaged in literary work; he wrote numerous poems, the best known of which is "Poe's Cottage at Fordham." HENRY T. STANTON (1834-1899), of Kentucky, is the author of one popular poem, "The Moneyless Man." JOHN CHARLES MCNEILL (1874-1907), of North Carolina, wrote several nature-lyrics, such as "October" and "At Sea," of fine quality, and many dialect poems. The limits of this work forbid the extension of an already long list.

THE CHAPTER IN OUTLINE

I. Poetry

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849): Poems—The Raven, The Bells, Ulalume, Annabel Lee, etc.; Short Stories; Critical Essays. Lover of beauty, terror, and mystery; father of the modern short story.

Sidney Lanier (1842-1881): Poems—Song of the Chattahoochee, Marshes of Glynn, Sunrise, etc.; The Science of English Verse. Applied musical technique to poetry.

Henry Timrod (1829-1867): Poems—Cotton Boll, Spring, Memorial Ode, etc. Singer of lyrics on nature and patriotism.

Paul Hamilton Hayne (1830-1886): Poems—Aspects of the Pines, The Mocking-Birds, Sonnets, etc. Nature poet; called "the laureate of the South."

II. Oratory

John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, Henry W. Grady (The New South).

III. Prose Fiction

William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870): Romances of War and Adventure —The Yemassee, The Partisan, The Scout, etc. Writer of stories about Indian and Revolutionary struggles in the South.

John P. Kennedy, J. Esten Cooke: Stories of old Southern life and conflict.

George W. Cable: Old Creole life in Louisiana.

Joel Chandler Harris (1848-1908): Negro Folk-lore—Uncle Remus stories.

Mary N. Murfree (Charles Egbert Craddock): The Tennessee Mountaineer.

James Lane Allen: The Romance of the Kentucky Blue Grass.

Thomas Nelson Page: Virginia in the "Golden Age."

William Sidney Porter (O. Henry) (1864-1910): Short-story writer—the romance of the common lot.

Southern poetry, mostly lyric, has the qualities of beauty, melody, and delicate technique; it is highly musical; it reflects the moods and coloring of nature. Southern fiction is essentially romantic, rich in "atmosphere."

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical and Social.—The South in the Building of the Nation (12 vols.); Histories of States in "American Commonwealths" series; Rhodes's History of the United States (1850-1877) is an elaborate study of a critical period; Wilson's Disunion and Reunion; Page's The Old South; Page's Social Life in Old Virginia before the War; Brown's The Lower South in American History.

Literary.—Library of Southern Literature (12 vols.); Holliday's History of Southern Literature (Neale); Manly's Southern Literature (B. F. Johnson Co.); Trent's Southern Writers (Macmillan); Baskerville's Southern Writers (2 vols.); Link's Pioneers of Southern Literature (2 vols.); Moses' The Literature of the South (Crowell); Abernethy's Southern Poets (Maynard); Painter's Poets of the South (American Bk. Co.); Clark's Songs of the South (Lippincott); Weber's The Southern Poets (Macmillan); Kent's Southern Poems (Houghton); McConnell's Selections from Southern Orators (Macmillan).

Poe.—Life by Woodberry, Harrison; complete works, edited by Harrison and Stewart ("Virginia Edition"), Woodberry and Stedman; complete poems, edited by Whitty; selections edited by Prescott, Trent, Graves, Kent, Stewart (B. F. Johnson Co.), etc.; Fruit's The Mind and Art of Poe; Smith's The American Short Story (Ginn).

Lanier.—Life by Mims (American Men of Letters); poems edited by his wife, with sketch of life by William Hayes Ward.

Timrod.—Memorial edition of Timrod's Poems (B. F. Johnson Co.) has a brief biographical sketch.

Simms.—Trent's Life of William Gilmore Simms (American Men of Letters) is the standard biography; The Yemassee has been edited, with notes and introduction, by Lyle (B. F. Johnson Co.). There is a good study of Simms in Erskine's Leading American Novelists (Holt).

Excellent one-volume collections from Southern literature are Trent's Southern Writers (Macmillan) and Mims and Payne's Southern Prose and Poetry (Scribner). The most comprehensive work is the Library of Southern Literature, edited by Kent and others.

CHAPTER SIX

WRITERS OF MIDDLE AND WESTERN STATES

I. EASTERN WRITERS

Magazines and Libraries.—From the first the magazine has served to introduce the unknown writer to his public, and those cities in which magazines have most flourished have gained the widest reputation as literary centers. The *North American Review* was founded in Boston in 1815 and later moved to New York; the *Knickerbocker*, or *New York Monthly Magazine*, was established in 1833; the *Southern Literary Messenger* began its career in Richmond in 1834; *Graham's Magazine*, in Philadelphia in 1841, a year later than *The Dial* in Boston; in 1850 *Harper's Magazine* appeared in New York, and three years later *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* was started; in 1857 the *Atlantic Monthly*, the greatest of American literary magazines, was established in Boston, with Lowell as editor; *Scribner's Monthly* (which became the *Century* in 1881) began in 1870; the present *Scribner's Magazine* was started in 1887. All these magazines have been instrumental in the development of American literature; among their editors have been such notable writers as Lowell, Poe, Aldrich, and Howells, while their contributors include the foremost names in our literature.

The magazines have thus helped to determine the making of literary centers. It has already been pointed out that Boston was the first of these, yielding to Philadelphia and then to New York; about 1840 Boston regained its prominence in letters. In the old South the nearest approach to a literary center was Charleston, South Carolina, in the days of Simms and his coterie, whose organ was *Russell's Magazine*, published in that city; this periodical and the *Southern Literary Messenger* of

Richmond, though never adequately supported, gave encouragement to younger writers. Since the passing of the classic New England group of authors, New York has again grown into prominence as a literary center. Here are issued most of the great metropolitan magazines, here are many of the great publishing houses, here are the largest newspapers. Hither come writers with their wares to sell; book-writing has become almost as well systematized a business as book-publishing: the magazines demand short stories and serials, and the enterprising publisher is on the lookout for the novelist who may have the manuscript of a "best seller." A close commercial relationship has accordingly come to exist between writer and publisher; the literary syndicate has become an important factor in contemporary authorship. Other great cities, such as Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago, have their literary interests and their publishing-houses, but New York, without having any well-defined school of writers, has preëminence as a magazine and publishing center.

Another stimulus to literary production has been the growth of public libraries. In all the great cities, and even in the smaller towns and villages, libraries have been established with remarkable rapidity; these minister in a large way to the recreational and cultural needs of the people and stimulate intellectual effort. Where there are libraries there is apt to be literary activity. Great book collections like the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library, the New York Public Library, the Newberry Library of Chicago, and others, are nucleating centers of literary influence.

The Growth of Realism.—Up to the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, American fiction had been essentially romantic in tone. The first of our novelists, Charles Brockden Brown, as we have seen, wrote of unusual sights and sounds and experiences, emphasizing the strange and the terrible; Cooper revealed the romance of the forest and the sea; Simms wrote of pioneer struggles with the Indians and of

Revolution times in the South; Irving invested with romantic charm the Hudson River region and its Dutch legends; Poe and Hawthorne were fond of the mysterious and the unusual; even the later story-writers, Cable, Harris, Allen, and others, have dwelt with delight upon a vanishing picturesque past about which an atmosphere of romance had formed.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, however, there was a decided shift of emphasis from the romantic to the

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
Washington, D. C.

realistic in novels and short stories. Absolute truth to life is what this newer school of writers demand. They felt that our fiction was falling into the bondage of tradition and in consequence failed sufficiently to take account of the vital forces round about it; "it remained for realism to assert that fidelity to experience and probability of motive are essential conditions of a great imaginative literature." They asserted that as romanticism displaced the worn-out classicism of the eighteenth century, so realism must supersede our tired romanticism. Instead of idealizing people and things, they would paint them as they are. The chief champions of realism in American fiction have been William Dean Howells and Henry James, both of whom will be considered presently. Howells defines realism as "nothing more and nothing less than

the truthful treatment of material"; and he asserts, furthermore, that "it wishes to know and to tell the truth, confident that consolation and delight are there." Democracy in literature, he thinks, demands this attitude of mind and this method of treatment. While the realists have not been able to apply their theory with perfect consistency, they have at any rate made its virtues clear and they have shown in their stories the spirit of reaction against the older romantic writing. No doubt the great vogue of the short story in the magazines has also hastened the growth of realism.

The Middle States writers may be divided into three groups: (1) The Essayists, (2) the Poets, and (3) the Novelists. Among the essayists are George William Curtis, Charles Dudley Warner, Donald G. Mitchell, and John Burroughs; among the poets, Bayard Taylor, Richard Henry Stoddard, Walt Whitman, Edmund Clarence Stedman, and Richard Watson Gilder; the novelists are William Dean Howells, Henry James, and F. Marion Crawford.

THE ESSAYISTS

George William Curtis (1824-1892).—George William Curtis, essayist, orator, and reformer, was born in Providence, Rhode Island; attended school near Boston; moved to New York at fifteen; spent two years (from eighteen to twenty) at Brook Farm, the idealistic community near Boston; lived a year at Concord in association with Emerson and other idealists; spent four years (1846-'50) in Europe and the Orient; and upon his return, settled down to literary work in New York. In 1854 he took charge of the "Easy Chair" in *Harper's Monthly*, and with that department and with *Harper's Weekly* as editorial writer he was connected until his death. He was also editor of *Putnam's Magazine* until its failure in 1857, and it is to be remembered to his honor that he insisted on paying the creditors of that periodical—a task of sixteen years. Curtis was a leader

in civil service reform, being the first chairman of the Civil Service Commission. Though he was active in politics, he persistently declined office. At heart and in practice he was essentially a reformer.

The most important writings of Curtis are *The Potiphar Papers*, *Prue and I*, and *Trumps*, a novel. These books are satires on the sordidness of fashionable New York life. The most pleasing of them is *Prue and I*, a delicate little prose idyl of a simple and happy life in contrast to that of the shallow and selfish metropolitan society. The most charming of his works is the series of papers selected from the "Easy Chair"; in this chatty, rambling personal essay Curtis was perfectly at home. His genial, refined nature shows at its best in these monthly talks; kindliness and human sympathy run through them all, relieved by gentle humor and graceful satire. To the urbanity of Addison he added the mildly playful humor of Lamb, though he was a more serious reformer than either. American literature has no more delightful bits of genial human philosophy than the "Easy Chair" essays. Other volumes are *Literary and Social Essays* and *Orations and Addresses*. Curtis was an accomplished orator, greatly in demand on academic occasions; the polish and refinement of his style and the purity of his ideals won for him an appreciative hearing; such an address, for instance, as "The Leadership of Educated Men," delivered at Brown University in 1882, is one of the most striking of his public utterances. Along with his charm of personality went the virtue of intense idealism, a fineness of culture, and an unwavering devotion to moral principles.

Charles Dudley Warner (1829-1900).—Charles Dudley Warner, essayist and journalist, was born in Plainfield, Massachusetts; educated at Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania; was for a few years a lawyer in Chicago; then turned to journalism, and was editor of newspapers in Hartford, Connecticut, and later, one of the editors of *Harper's Magazine*.

His first noteworthy book was *My Summer in a Garden* (1870), a collection of pleasing sketches which established his reputation as an essayist and humorist. Other works are *Being a Boy, Backlog Studies,* and several entertaining volumes of travels. *Being a Boy* abounds in reminiscences of the author's own New England boyhood, and is an altogether charming book; *Backlog Studies* is a volume of delightful conversations on literature, topics of the day, and matters of sentiment. Besides these works, Warner wrote several novels, which have not added to his fame, and collaborated with Mark Twain in *The Gilded Age.* He is, moreover, author of an interesting life of Irving in the "American Men of Letters" series, of which he was the general editor.

Whatever Charles Dudley Warner touched he adorned; he was a man of wide culture, broad sympathies, keen moral sensibilities, and delicate humor. He combined the qualities of a journalist of the best type with those of the lover of books and the successful man of letters; there is in his writings an element of genial friendliness which wins the reader at once. He belongs in the same class with Irving, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and George William Curtis, all of them personal essayists who please by the "diffused light which illuminates their writing on various themes, not by any startling or sensational effect."

Donald G. Mitchell (1822-1908).—Donald Grant Mitchell, better known by his penname of "Ik Marvel," was born at Norwich, Connecticut; educated at Yale; traveled in Europe, and wrote a volume of impressions; studied law, but never practised; after another trip abroad, he wrote a book of sketches in the vein of Irving's earlier work; was United States consul at Venice from 1853 to 1855; on his return to America he settled down on his farm Edgewood, near New Haven, where as a sort of rural philosopher and gentleman farmer he spent the rest of his life. He was for many years a member of the

council of the Yale Art School and gave some lectures on English literature in the university.

The two books that brought fame to Mitchell are *Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) and *Dream Life* (1851), sketches of gentle sentiment, somewhat old-fashioned in this day of strenuous realism, but pleasant reading when the dreamy mood holds youth in thrall on soft summer days. Few books of their kind have attained a wider popularity. "Ik Marvel" wrote many other works—*My Farm at Edgewood, Wet Days at Edgewood, Rural Studies, English Lands, Letters, and Kings, American Lands and Letters,* besides editing the *Atlantic Almanac* and *Hearth and Home* for a year or two. His life was one of quiet devotion to literature in a charming rural retreat; he was a bucolic philosopher of mellow culture, mildly sentimental and tenderly sympathetic, who wrote in a clear, high-bred, leisurely style not unlike Irving's.

John Burroughs (1837—).—John Burroughs, essayist and naturalist, was born in Roxbury, New York; had scant opportunities for an education, but was an eager and diligent reader and a keen observer of outdoor life; taught school for nine years; worked for a time in the Treasury Department at Washington, and was later employed as a bank-examiner; in 1874 he settled down at Esopus on the Hudson in Ulster County; here at his home, Riverby, and at his retreat a mile away in the woods, Slabsides, he reads, writes, and enjoys the undisturbed companionship of his neighbors, the birds and the squirrels. He is a naturalist with the curiosity and patience of a scientist and the artistic sensibilities of a literary man.

Burroughs has written a number of books on nature—*Wake Robin, Locusts and Wild Honey, Fresh Fields, Signs and Seasons, Sharp Eyes,* and others,—all drawn directly from his close observation of life about him at Slabsides. "You must have the bird in your heart," says he, "before you can find it in the bush." That is the secret of his lively portrayal of animate as well as inanimate life—he has both the bird and the bush in

his heart. He has written fresh and vital verse on outdoor themes, published in a volume called *Bird and Bough*. Burroughs is also a literary critic of remarkable sanity and penetration: Thoreau, Emerson, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and Walt Whitman, are his masters; from them he learned how to write with clearness and vigor and how to keep his eye on the object. In his literary essays, originally contributed to the magazines and later published as *Indoor Studies* and *Literary Values*, he talks with great good sense and with artistic discrimination of style, on the relation of literature to life and other matters in the field of appreciative criticism. He is an essayist of open mind and broad sympathies, with a suggestive style which has the flavor of the outdoors.

THE POETS

Bayard Taylor (1825-1878).—Bayard Taylor, poet, traveler, and novelist, was born at Kennett Square, Chester county, Pennsylvania, of Quaker and German ancestry; attended the local schools, and was at seventeen apprenticed to a printer; indulging his passion for travel, he made long journeys in Europe and the Orient as correspondent of New York papers, and soon after the publication of *Views Afoot* in 1846 he became a regular contributor to the New York *Tribune*. Though spending much time in travel at home and abroad, he had an ambition to own land and a fine mansion; accordingly, just after his marriage in 1857 to a German lady he bought the old Taylor homestead and much additional land and built Cedarcroft, a princely home for a man of letters. Here he studied several languages and wrote many of his works. In 1869 he was appointed lecturer on German literature in Cornell University, and in 1878 was sent as United States minister to Germany, but died a few months after his arrival at Berlin.

The works of Bayard Taylor, who ranks with Lowell and Holmes in versatility, include several volumes of poems, eleven

volumes of travels, and four novels. He preferred to be considered a poet; and in spirit he was essentially poetic. Some of his most notable productions in verse are *Poems of the Orient* (1854), lyrics of sensuous beauty, of which the "Bedouin Song" is the best known; *The Poet's Journal* (1862), another collection of short poems; the long poems, *Lars: a Pastoral of Norway, The Prophet, The Masque of the Gods, Prince Deukalion,* —the last three dramatic pieces; *Home Pastorals and Ballads,* the *Gettysburg Ode,* and the *Centennial Ode* (1876). The "Bedouin Song," especially the concluding refrain in each stanza, is familiar to readers of American verse:

From the desert I come to thee,
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry:
I love thee! I love but thee!
With a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

Look from thy window and see
My passion and my pain!
I lie on the sands below,
And I faint in thy disdain.
Let the night-winds touch thy brow
With the heat of my burning sigh,
And melt thee to hear the vow
Of a love that shall not die
Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

My steps are nightly driven,
By the fever in my breast,
To hear from thy lattice breathed
The word that shall give me rest.

Open the door of thy heart,
  And open thy chamber door,
And my kisses shall teach thy lips
  The love that shall fade no more
    Till the sun grows cold,
    And the stars are old,
    And the leaves of the Judgment Book unfold!

The poetic work of Bayard Taylor that seems likely to live the longest is his translation of Goethe's *Faust* (1870) in the original meters. He knew the German language well, he had a wide and sympathetic acquaintance with German literature, and he succeeded in making a translation which holds its own as the best version in English of Goethe's great poem. In his own verse, particularly in his lyrics, Taylor shows delicate and finished craftsmanship, but there is a lack of simplicity and spontaneity; there are unmistakable echoes of Shelley and Tennyson, without the compelling charm of those masters. Still, in view both of the variety of his verse and the artistic finish of some of it, he will be remembered as a true poet, if not as a great one.

Among Bayard Taylor's voluminous prose works the *Views Afoot* (1846) may safely be called his best. He was an indefatigable traveler, he had an interesting personality, he had imagination, and he had a graphic style. One may take up these books of travel to-day and not be disappointed, so fresh and vital are the touches, so human is the point of view of the tramp-author in his journeyings through many lands. But the novels are distinctly disappointing: *Hannah Thurston* deals with the various isms of the middle of the nineteenth century—spiritualism, vegetarianism, teetotalism, and the like,—and is accordingly a kind of satire on reformers; *The Story of Kennett* centers about the author's old home and is a pleasing picture of familiar people and background, with an element of autobiography. These are agreeable books, but they do not impress the reader so favorably as Taylor's poems and travels.

WALT WHITMAN

WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

His Life.—Walt Whitman was born at West Hills, Long Island, May 31, 1819, of English and Dutch ancestry. His father, a carpenter and farmer, was also named Walter, and the son, to distinguish him from his father, came to be known as Walt. The family moved to Brooklyn when Walt was four years old, and in and around Brooklyn, with frequent long stays in the country, he spent much of the first forty years of his life. He attended the public schools of Brooklyn, and at the age of fourteen learned to set type. For many years after this he worked on newspapers in New York and Brooklyn as typesetter, contributor, and editor, being for a year editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle*. Meanwhile he had become thoroughly acquainted with New York City and its environs; he knew the omnibus drivers on Broadway, with whom he loved to ride; he was fond of the opera and the theater; he delighted in bathing off Coney Island beach and in skating on the Long Island bays; he would race up and down the hard sand, he says, declaiming Homer and Shakespeare to the surf and sea-gulls by the hour. During one or two winters he taught school, and by 1849 he had written a number of pieces in prose and verse.

That year he left Brooklyn for a leisurely trip through the Middle States, down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, where he worked for a time on the editorial staff of the *Daily Crescent;* then he gave up his position and slowly plodded his way northward, up the Mississippi, by way of the Great Lakes, Niagara Falls, Southern Canada, and down the Hudson to New York. He had made in all a journey of about eight thousand miles and gained valuable experience. He now returned to his old work of editing and printing; he also engaged with his father in his old business of building and selling houses in Brooklyn. He had now decided, however, to devote himself mainly to writing the poetry of Democracy, having experienced a sort of conversion from things material to concerns literary and patriotic. He accordingly composed and printed in 1855 his first edition of representative poems, *Leaves of Grass*, giving only so much time to his industrial occupations as was necessary for a simple support.

In 1862 Whitman's brother was wounded in the first battle of Fredericksburg, and the poet went South to nurse him. Thus began his long service as an army and hospital attendant, which continued until the army hospitals at Washington were closed. These years of ministration in the tents and hospitals of the Union army constitute the most interesting and admirable period in Whitman's life. He was not so much a regular nurse as a visitor and comforter of the sick and wounded, bringing good cheer and doing various little services for the soldiers, though he dressed many wounds and watched by the dying. After the war he was appointed to a clerkship in the Interior Department at Washington; from this he was removed because of objection to certain coarse passages in his *Leaves of Grass*, but was soon given a clerkship in the office of the Attorney-General. This position he held until 1873, when a stroke of paralysis compelled him to give up regular work. He retired to Camden, New Jersey, where his brother was living, and there as a semi-invalid he spent the rest of his long life, supported partly by the meager income from his books and partly by the gifts of admiring friends. He died March 26, 1892, and was buried in Harleigh Cemetery, Camden.

His Personality.—In his earlier life Walt Whitman seems to have been a man of boundless vitality, full of interest in things and people around him. His health was good and the mere joy of living filled his whole being. He freely associated with all sorts and conditions of men—laborers, omnibus drivers, street-car conductors, ferry-boat pilots, tramps, farm hands, and the motley city crowds. He loved humanity not simply

in the mass, but better as individuals; he said he liked to stay close to men, look upon them, and touch them. He liked what was elemental, energetic, and creative in human nature, the unspoiled animal in man. He also loved the outdoors, the sea, the woods, the wide expanse of field, and the open road. There was something of the vagabond in him: his associations in his early New York days must have been decidedly Bohemian.

The nature of Walt Whitman was freely and ruggedly democratic; his sympathies were broad and deep, and there was an instinct of great tenderness in him. This was manifested in his unselfish service as a volunteer nurse in the army hospitals, a period of his life on which he afterwards thought with peculiar satisfaction, as do the readers of his own *Specimen Days*. And yet it cannot be denied that he was considerable of an egotist, that he was fond of posing, and that he sometimes showed an utter lack of a sense of propriety. His admirers glorify his strong, genuine personality; others, unable to get up enthusiasm for the man, regard him as uncouth and vulgar. The truth is doubtless to be found, as usual, somewhere between these extremes. Whitman was a man of large, primitive nature, a free and powerful personality, whose defects are the "taints of liberty" in a big, human individual with the redeeming virtues of sincerity and strength.

His Poetry.—The first edition of Whitman's one volume of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, appeared in 1855; the volume was enlarged from time to time up to the year before the poet's death. Besides this collection of verse, there is a volume of prose containing the interesting essay, *Democratic Vistas* (1870) and a series of short pieces, some of them autobiographic, entitled *Specimen Days*. A number of letters have been collected and published in a volume called *The Wound-Dresser*. It is his poetry, however, which must concern us here, the book he named *Leaves of Grass*.

Whitman's earliest experiments in verse were in conventional rhyme and meter, contributed to newspapers and magazines;

there is nothing remarkable about these productions either in form or sentiment. Evidently Whitman definitely decided to try something new in verse-form, either because he found he could not be free enough in the old, or, as some insist, having failed in the old, he wanted to attract attention by being eccentric. The first is the likelier explanation; wishing to chant the song of Democracy he felt himself cramped in the traditional poetic dress. That he diligently strove to acquire an unusual method of utterance is proved by this remark: "I had great trouble in leaving out the stock 'poetical' touches, but succeeded at last." This also considerably modifies the "inspiration theory" of those worshipful admirers who find in his poetry the exaltation of the prophets of old. The truth is, Whitman carefully revised and elaborated his poems, rearranging them more than once to accord with his assertion that *Leaves of Grass* was to be regarded as a unified whole and not a collection in one volume of scattered, unrelated pieces.

The form of the verse is indeed peculiar. With the exception of the well-known "O Captain! My Captain!" there are few rhyming lines in *Leaves of Grass* and little regularity of line-length and stanza-length. There is rhythm, however, such as we find in Biblical verse. Whitman loved to declaim Homer (in translation, of course), Shakespeare, and the sonorous prose of the King James version of the Bible; nourished on these, he had naturally caught something of their movement. His own verse is a form of rhythmical chant, which, when read aloud in sufficiently long stretches, falls upon the ear with a cadence like that of orchestral music. The trouble with most readers is that they interpret through the eye alone; poetry is intended to be heard as well as seen, and real poetry cannot be properly enjoyed without vocal interpretation; this is particularly true of Whitman's verse. He himself likened it to "the recurrence of lesser and larger waves on the seashore, rolling in without intermission, and fitfully rising and falling." If one will read aloud to the very end such chants as "Out of the

Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed," one will discover a melody, a slow lilting effect which is both calming and ennobling. It is useless to attempt to scan such verse, for it was not made to scan; in the best of it there is a larger, freer harmony that befits the primal things of which this man of elemental mold knew how to sing.

But there are pages and pages of Whitman's verse which are mere catalogues without rhythm or reason, perplexing enumerations of objects jumbled together in a weltering chaos. These passages do not reward an effort to find a hidden harmony. Now and then one comes across a fine phrase, a few lines touched with fancy, in the dreary inventory, as if in the midst of a prosaic stretch the writer had intermittent flashes of inspiration. To judge a poet by such lapses would of course be unfair; probably a third to a half of Wordsworth might be omitted without serious loss to English poetry and certainly we might do without that much of Browning. Whitman insisted that in writing the complete poetry of Democracy, the interpreter of which he boasted himself to be, his method must be inclusive; nothing was to be considered too mean or too trivial to be celebrated in song. This feeling will in part account for the "cataloguing" processes in his verse; the very names of familiar objects probably had for him a poetic connotation.

The variety, the outdoor freshness, and the newness of the subject matter of Whitman's poetry become evident from such titles as these: "There was a Child Went Forth," "Song of Myself," "Song of the Open Road," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "I hear America Singing," "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," "O Magnet-South," "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" "As Toilsome I wandered Virginia's Woods," "From Paumanok Starting I fly like a Bird," "With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea!" "By Blue Ontario's Shore." These words and phrases have both rhythm and imaginative suggestiveness; indeed, no other American poet is

so happy as Whitman in coining taking titles with an air of democratic freedom and an outlook of vast horizons. Often what follows a promising heading is distinctly disappointing—the artistic headlines are not sustained by the body of the poem; then, on the other hand, one is time and again uplifted by such fine lines as these, chosen here and there:

Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle.

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear.

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night,
When you my son and my comrade dropt at my side that day.

Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full dazzling,
Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields
and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming wharves
and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death.

Shadowy vast shapes smile through the air and sky,
And on the distant waves sail countless ships,
And anthems in new tongues I hear saluting me.

Over against such rhythmical lines as these, in which Whitman nearly approaches the conventional standard of poetry, place the following passages:

The axe leaps!
The solid forest gives fluid utterances,
They tumble forth, they rise and form,
Hut, tent, landing, survey,
Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade,
Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, jamb, lath, panel, gable,

Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ exhibition house, library,
Cornice, trellis, pilaster, balcony, window, turret, porch,
Hoe, rake, pitchfork, pencil, wagon, staff, saw, jack-plane,
mallet, wedge, rounce,
Chair, tub, hoop, table, wicket, vane, sash, floor,
Work-box, chest, stringed instrument, boat, frame, and what not,
Capitols of States, and capitol of the nation of States.

The sun and stars that float in the open air,
The apple-shaped earth and we upon it, surely the drift of them
is something grand,
I do not know what it is except that it is grand, and that it is
happiness,
And that the enclosing purport of us here is not a speculation or
bon-mot or reconnoissance,
And that it is not something which by luck that may turn out well
for us, and without luck must be a failure for us,
And not something which may yet be retracted in a certain
contingency.

If these two passages be poetry, then certainly we must revise our definitions. Fortunately, however, there is enough real poetry in *Leaves of Grass*, although it lacks regularity of meter, on which to pass judgment without taking into account such incoherent masses of words as these. It is easy to parody Whitman at his worst and call his verse in general mere "barbaric yawp"; but there is still a large amount of verse of very different quality to be reckoned with.

We shall not have to modify our standards of poetry to include such a noble chant as "When Lilacs last in the Door-yard Bloomed," which no one with musical sensibility can read aloud without acknowledging its power over the imagination and the emotions. It is a dirge for Lincoln, whom the poet greatly admired. The interweaving of the three *motifs* of the poem—

Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul,

is effectively done. "Never but once before, in 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,' was Whitman capable of such

sustained and deep-toned recitative, varied with lyric interludes of such pure beauty."[1] These two longer poems and the shorter ones—"Pioneers! O Pioneers!" "When I Heard the Learned Astronomer," "The Singer in the Prison," "The Mystic Trumpeter," "The Prayer of Columbus," and "With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea!"—give one a taste of Whitman at his best.

Characteristics and Contribution.—When we try to sum up and appraise Whitman's qualities, the first thing to be said is that he consciously set about bringing into poetry something new—"things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." In his notebooks, prefaces, and verse he announces his program. He would be the spokesman for American Democracy in its ruggedness, strength, and freedom; he would, moreover, "get a real human being into a book" in his entirety. After speaking of Homer, Shakespeare, and Scott, and their respective contributions, he concludes: "I will be also a master after my own kind, making the poems of emotion, as they pass or stay, the poems of freedom, and the exposé of personality—singing in high tones Democracy and the New World of it through These States." A significant entry in one of his notebooks is, "Write a book of new things." In his poem, "The Song of the Open Road," he adjures the reader:

> Listen! I will be honest with you,
> I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes;

and in the opening verses of *Leaves of Grass* he declares his intention:

> One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
> Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.
>
> Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
> Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I
> say the Form complete is worthier far,
> The Female equally with the Male I sing.

[1] Bliss Perry: *Walt Whitman*, p. 157.

Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
Cheerful, for freest action formed under the laws divine,
The Modern Man I sing.

From these quotations it is evident that Whitman is a strong individualist. Here he is akin to Emerson and the other transcendentalists. We find in him a curious compound of realist, mystic, and egotist. The flattering notice of the English critic Symonds, and of the poets Tennyson and Swinburne, and of Emerson in particular—an extract from whose letter of congratulation was, in violation of good taste, emblazoned in gilt letters on the cover of the second edition of *Leaves of Grass*—fed Whitman's natural egotism. Whittier threw the copy sent him into the fire, and many reviewers severely criticized the queer book. The literary war continued off and on for a number of years, and even now there is no unanimity of opinion on Whitman as a poet. He was charged with obscenity because of his frank treatment of sex; granted that in a complete portrayal of life a writer might demand the right to deal with this subject in a large epic way as one of nature's creative processes, it cannot be denied that Whitman's indelicate method justly gives offense. Without being erotic, he made the mistake of supposing that realism demands the dragging in of offensive subjects. Indeed, the most serious defect of this apostle of Democracy was his lack of a sense of proportion—his evident inability to select the material susceptible of artistic treatment and to reject the rest. The elimination of the dross of human life is the way of the great poets.

But when all is told—the uncouthness, the cataloguing, the formlessness, the stress of the commonplace, the fleshly element, the absence of romantic love,—the important fact remains that Walt Whitman greatly enlarged the sphere of American poetry. He was hailed by foreign critics as the typical American poet who had arrived at last. Undoubtedly he voices the bigness and the democratic freedom of a new country, but it takes a great many things to make a nation, and he can justly

be said to be the interpreter of only some of the most significant phases of Democracy, not of all. Those who read him aright will find a distinct strain of idealism in his verse, notes of cheer and courage in the song of material triumph. His audience will probably never be very large; it will, as Mr. Bliss Perry says, "be limited to those who have the intellectual and moral generosity to understand him, and will take the pains to do so."

Richard Henry Stoddard (1825-1903).—Richard Henry Stoddard was born at Hingham, Massachusetts; went to New York at the age of ten, and after a few years' schooling worked at various jobs until 1853, when he became a clerk in the New York customhouse; this position he filled for seventeen years; for a short time he was clerk in the dock commissioner's office, and then city librarian; he had meanwhile been literary editor of the New York *World*, and during the last twenty years of his life he held a similar position on the *Mail and Express*. From his boyhood Stoddard was devoted to poetry; he worked by day, but gave his waking hours at night to the reading and writing of verse. Though he had published two collections of verse before 1856, it was in this year that his poetic reputation was firmly established by the appearance of *Songs of Summer*, which Stedman praises for melody and artistic beauty.

Stoddard wrote several volumes of literary criticism and reminiscences, but he will be remembered as a lyric poet of charm and distinction. He had a fine sense for form and beauty which shows in the structure and harmony of his shorter poems. Among these are 'The Sky is a Drinking-Cup," "The Flight of Youth," "A Gazelle," "Hymn to the Sea," "Birds." One of his most exquisite poems is "Leonatus," a kind of romantic ballad on "the fair boy Leonatus, the page of Imogen," which would have done credit to Coleridge. Stoddard is less imitative in his lyrics than in his longer poems, and he has an assured place in American literature as a singer of delicate sensibility.

Edmund Clarence Stedman (1833-1908).—Edmund Clarence Stedman was born in Connecticut, but spent most of his life in New York as a journalist and banker. His interests in Wall Street, where he was fairly successful, won for him the name of "the banker poet"; his heart, however, was more in his poetry and criticism than in the transactions of the Stock Exchange, of which for thirty-six years he was a member. He is best as a lyric and occasional poet; in the latter respect he sometimes almost rivals Holmes. His verse shows careful workmanship, and now and then—as, for instance, in the song, "Thou art mine, thou hast given thy word"—it becomes impassioned. Several of his well-known poems are "Pan in Wall Street," "The World Well Lost," "Si Jeunesse Savait" (If Youth only Knew), and "Wanted—A Man"; some of his most successful verse was called forth by the war. Stedman is one of the most accomplished of American critics; his three volumes, *The Victorian Poets, Poets of America,* and *The Nature and Elements of Poetry,* show uncommon critical ability, though he lacks the insight and originality of Poe and Lowell. So far his *American Anthology* is the best one-volume collection of our poetry, while his *Library of American Literature* (in collaboration with Hutchinson) is the only comprehensive work of its kind.

Richard Watson Gilder (1833-1908).—Richard Watson Gilder was born in New Jersey, and spent much of his life in New York as editor of the *Century Magazine.* His first volume of poems, *The New Day,* came out in 1875; other volumes are *Five Books of Song* and *A Christmas Wreath.* His most characteristic verse reveals refinement of feeling and a delicate sense of form, as does that of other poets of this minor group. Perhaps his most famous production is "The Sonnet," which is itself a fine example of that difficult poetic form:

> What is a sonnet? 'Tis a pearly shell
> That murmurs of the far-off murmuring sea;
> A precious jewel carved most curiously;
> It is a little picture painted well.

What is a sonnet? 'Tis the tear that fell
From a great poet's hidden ecstasy;
A two-edged sword, a star, a song—ah me!
Sometimes a heavy-tolling funeral bell.
This was the flame that shook with Dante's breath,
The solemn organ whereon Milton played,
And the clear glass where Shakespeare's shadow falls:
A sea this is—beware who ventureth!
For like a fiord the narrow floor is laid
Mid-ocean deep to the sheer mountain walls.

Other Eastern Poets.—Among other poets of the Middle States group, the following are worthy of note: GEORGE H. BOKER (1823-1890), native of Philadelphia, graduate of Princeton, minister to Turkey and to Russia. Boker wrote many lyric poems of merit; his sonnets are among the best in American poetry; it is his tragedy, *Francesca da Rimini*, however, that has won for him lasting fame. Of the many treatments of Dante's well-known scene, Boker's is one of the finest blank-verse dramatizations; it is still seen on the stage, and is the only one of his plays familiar to this generation. The verse and the movement of *Francesca da Rimini* show a high order of artistic talent. ALICE AND PHOEBE CARY, sisters, went to New York in 1852 from their Ohio home and until their deaths in 1871 wrote many poems. Their verse is for the most part gravely sentimental: Alice Cary had the vein of deeper pathos, while Phoebe Cary was more cheerful. The popular hymn, "One Sweetly Solemn Thought," is by Phoebe Cary. JOSIAH GILBERT HOLLAND (1819-1881) was a native of Massachusetts, but spent the last ten years of his life in New York as editor of *Scribner's Monthly*. His stories in verse, *Bitter-Sweet* and *Katrina*, were once widely read, but the commonplace quality of subject matter and style has made against the permanency of their fame; their tone, however, is wholesome and their ideals high. THOMAS BUCHANAN READ (1822-1872), native of Chester county, Pennsylvania, was a painter and poet. Of his numerous poems the most enduring have proved to be "Sheridan's Ride" and the languorous lyric, "Drifting." EMMA LAZARUS (1849-1887), of New York, is the author of meritorious poems, among which are *Admetus*, *Songs of a Semite*, and *The Dance of Death*. FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN (1860—) and BRANDER MATTHEWS (1852—) are Columbia University professors who have written verse of excellent quality. HENRY VAN DYKE (1852—), of Princeton, has, in addition to his prose stories and sketches, produced verse of a pleasing and uplifting nature. Of all present-day poets of the Middle States, GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY (1855—), sometime professor in Columbia

University, is perhaps the most eminent for the finish and tone of his verse. PERCY MACKAYE (1875—), a native of New York City, has written poetic dramas, such as *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, of literary distinction and good acting qualities. EDITH M. THOMAS (1854—), a native of Ohio but long resident in New York, has written lyric and dramatic verse of fine quality.

THE NOVELISTS

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837—)

His Life.—William Dean Howells, the leader of realism in American prose fiction, was born at Martin's Ferry, Ohio, in 1837. He early went to work in his father's newspaper office, and there learned to be a printer. Naturally he turned to writing for the papers; this journalistic experience was his education, for he had no opportunity to go to college. He wrote for the Cincinnati *Gazette* and the Columbus *State Journal*, and in 1860 prepared a campaign biography of Lincoln. This latter effort was rewarded by his appointment as consul to Venice; here he spent four years (1861-'65), studying, observing, writing. His residence in the old city in the sea was the turning-point of his life. Upon his return to America he settled in New York, where he did journalistic work on several papers. In 1866 he became assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* in Boston, and editor in 1872; this position he held until 1881. Since then he has been on the editorial staff of the *Century* and of *Harper's Magazine*, though most of his time has been given to the writing of novels and other forms of literature. By 1875 Howells's fame as a writer of fiction was established, and he has long been classed among the standard American authors. The occasion of his seventieth birth-

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

day in 1907 was made memorable by a notable gathering of writers in New York in his honor.

His Works.—Howells has written seventy-five or eighty books in all—travels, plays, essays, sketches, reminiscences, poems, and novels. His literary career may be divided into three periods: to the first belong such books as *Their Wedding Journey* (1871), *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1878), and *The Undiscovered Country* (1880); to the second, or middle, period, the well-known novels, *A Modern Instance* (1882), *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), *The Minister's Charge* (1886), *Indian Summer* (1886), and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889); to the third, *Their Silver Wedding Journey*, *The Kentons*, and *The Son of Royal Langbrith* (1904). His most valuable contribution to literary criticism is his little book on the novel, *Criticism and Fiction* (1891).

The earlier work of William Dean Howells is more touched with romantic fancy than the later; something of the coloring of the youthful Venetian days seems to linger in the first stories. By the time he wrote *Silas Lapham*, however, his idealism had paled into the light of common day. That novel, certainly one of his best, traces the development of a self-made merchant through great financial prosperity to the loss of his fortunes and the final triumph of his moral integrity. His rise from obscurity, his family's social ambitions in Boston, his lack of culture, his business transactions, are all treated in an entertaining and artistic fashion, so that the story is both a lifelike narrative and a gentle satire on social climbing and the pride of wealth. *The Rise of Silas Lapham* is a thorough bit of American realism, redeemed from the commonplace by the ease, naturalness, and playful humor with which Howells invests his delineation of provincial characters. One of the strongest of his novels is *A Modern Instance*, of which he says, "I have there come closest to American life as I know it." Powerful as the book is, it is not pleasant reading, for it reveals in a depressing way the sordid manner of life in an unhappy

family, where petty jealousy, dishonesty, and weariness darken domestic relationships. In delightful contrast to all this is *Indian Summer*, the scene of which is laid in Florence, Italy, a land that Howells knew and loved. The story revolves around the sentimental association of three persons—a young girl of imaginative temperament, a widow, and a man of forty-odd whose slight disillusion with life gives his talk a certain pleasing piquancy. In the novelist's later manner is *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, a study of New York life with reference to the complex and infinite social problems of the metropolis.

From this running comment on several of Howells's typical novels it will be seen that he is a realist of quite modern interests. For the romantic material of the past which forms the staple of older novelists he did not care; Walter Scott does not appeal to him, nor, for that matter, does Thackeray with his ethical interruptions of the plot; Jane Austen, with her faithful and minute delineations of neighborhood life, is his favorite English novelist, and among the moderns Tolstoy seems to have influenced him most. In his luminous little book, *Criticism and Fiction*, Howells sets forth clearly and emphatically his theory of the novel. He quotes approvingly these words of Emerson: "I ask not for the great, the remote, the romantic . . . I embrace the common; I sit at the feet of the familiar and the low . . . Man is surprised to find that things near are not less beautiful and wondrous than things remote . . . The perception of the worth of the vulgar is fruitful in discoveries." It seems a little strange that so consummate an idealist as Emerson should furnish a text for so ardent a realist as Howells, and it is doubtful whether the Concord sage would have agreed with the novelist's application of it. However that may be, these words virtually express the theme of his discussion of the aims and materials of fiction. "Realism," he declares, "is nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material"; and he goes on to indicate the proper method of procedure in novel-writing: "We must ask ourselves before we

ask anything else, Is it true?—true to the motives, the impulses, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women?" Accordingly, we find little that is thrilling in his books; the plot is slight and the interest is mainly in the talk of the characters and their relation to each other.

Howells does not always rigidly follow his theory; the popularity of his novels shows that the mild romance of every-day life is certainly in them and that his treatment of the crude material is artistic. We miss in them, it is true, the far horizon, the uplifting tone, the inspiriting note of the idealists; the impression one gets from reading them is that the world is a dead-level sort of place, without spiritual significance; we are too much in the presence of the trivialities of practical life; we would welcome an outlook, a vista through the city blocks and social sets to the delectable mountains beyond. The average man and woman are too much in evidence in his books, and the dreary routine of life seems unduly prominent. Despite these limitations, however, he has rendered a significant service to American literature: his novels are remarkably clever studies of certain cross-sections of contemporary society; he has helped to restrain the excesses of sentimental and romantic fiction by insisting on truthfulness to life; he has influenced the development of the American novel in the matter of clearer technique; and he has furnished as a model for youthful writers a style of rare grace and distinction. Besides all this, he has shown a keen interest in movements for social reform, as might be expected from an enthusiastic admirer of Tolstoy; while to young writers, eager to win their spurs in the perilous tournament of letters, he has ever been ready to extend the sympathetic hand. If his books lack elevation, as compared with the creations of the masters who saw life whole rather than in sections, they are at least thoroughly convincing by their lifelikeness of character and incident; and they appeal to the cultivated man or woman with knowledge of the world,

by their refined humor and delicate irony. They give such readers keen intellectual joy.

Henry James (1843—).—A more subtle and thoroughgoing realist is Henry James, who was born in New York, but who has spent most of his life abroad. His father was a distinguished theologian; his brother, Professor William James, of Harvard University, was a psychologist of world-wide reputation. Henry James was educated in Europe, studied law for a while at Harvard, but soon gave it up for literature. He began writing sketches for the magazines; in 1875 he published his first volume of stories, *The Passionate Pilgrim*; then followed the novels, *Roderick Hudson* (1875), *The American* (1877), *Daisy Miller* (1878), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Bostonians* (1886), *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), *The Tragic Muse* (1890), *The Wings of a Dove* (1902), *The Golden Bowl* (1904), and others.

James's temperament and cosmopolitan training fitted him for writing a type of fiction essentially different from that of other novelists. His short stories, for instance, are free from the supernatural and romantic atmosphere that invests those of Poe and Hawthorne; they are realistic situations around which he lets his ingenious fancy play. This in truth is James's way in all his stories, long and short. His method is scientific, metaphysical; he does not ordinarily sympathize with his characters; he dissects them, studies them critically, almost disinterestedly; his attitude is intellectual; he is interested in the game, in the clash of personalities in the complex problems of life. There is little or no plot proper; situations, groupings, interplay of mind with mind, brilliant conversation, minute analysis, constitute the processes of his art. For action he does not care; brain movements chiefly concern him; refined psychology is his product. He tries to make clear to his readers "that life is an art, and that to play the game properly requires infinite finesse." The question arises in the mind of the reader whether James has not over-refined his art,

chilling "the genial current of the soul" with his acute and fastidious dissection of character and motive. His subtlety tends to end in enigma and his analysis in obscurity; the saner sentiment of his earlier books is succeeded by a bewildering metaphysical tangle in the latter; the involved diction seriously taxes the patience.

The unique contribution of Henry James is the "international novel." He likes to introduce American characters into old-world scenes and then study the behavior of crude specimens of democracy in an aristocratic setting. Thus, he transports the independent and unconventional girl, Daisy Miller, to Italy, and against the background of European culture depicts the doings and sayings of this dashing western creature in whom throbs a buoyant life untrammeled by tradition. It is cleverly done; the technique is perfect; the style is faultlessly urbane. James's culture is immense; he is an acute thinker and a sensitive observer; but so refined is his art that his appeal must always be limited. His brother, William James, it has been remarked, wrote psychology like a novelist, while he himself wrote novels like a psychologist. Save for the fact that he was born in America and that he is fond of delineating American characters in European surroundings, Henry James need hardly be classed as an American writer; he lives in England, and his preferences are foreign.

Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909).—Another international writer is Francis Marion Crawford, who was born in Italy and spent much of his life in that romantic land. His father was Thomas Crawford, of New York, the well-known sculptor, who designed the bronze figure of liberty on the capitol dome at Washington and the equestrian statue of Washington in the capitol square at Richmond. Young Crawford was educated at Concord, New Hampshire, the University of Cambridge, England, the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and Harvard University. He also studied in Rome. He went to India to continue his study of Sanskrit,

and while in that country he did journalistic work. His first important novel, *Mr. Isaacs*, was the result of his observations of Oriental life during his two years' sojourn in India. In 1884 he settled at Sorrento, Italy, overlooking the Bay of Naples, and in that enchanting spot he made his home the rest of his life.

Crawford was a prolific writer, turning out a novel or two a year for many years until about thirty volumes were produced. The best of his novels have European settings, though he wrote several stories on American life. *Mr. Isaacs* appeared in 1882 and at once made his reputation: it is romantic in tone, as befits the mystic East; accidents and coincidences seem to suit the hero's temperament in such an atmosphere. The Italian trilogy, *Saracinesca, Sant' Ilario*, and *Don Orsino*, many regard as his best work. These three novels trace the fortunes of an old Roman family during the last days of the papal power, before the unification of Italy in 1870, and in the early years of the new order. As a picture of life in Rome in those stirring times this series is valuable, for Crawford was thoroughly familiar with his subject; as a story of lively happenings and clear-cut personalities, when the aristocracy of old Italy was on the decline, it is intensely interesting. *Saracinesca* holds the attention to the end; the beautiful young wife of the worn-out old dandy, the Duke Astardente, wins one's liking from the first, while the impetuous and sound-hearted old Prince Saracinesca is a figure of epic proportions. Other entertaining novels are *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance*, a story of Russian exiles in Munich; *A Roman Singer*; *Dr. Claudius*; and the historical works, *Ave Roma Immortalis* and *Salve Venetia*.

Crawford's stories, unlike those of Howells and James, are essentially romantic, though he deals with his material in a realistic way. His characters seem quite human and their surroundings give peculiar significance to them. He knew well the background of his novels, for he was a keen observer

and a diligent student of history, language, and art. He had his theory of story-telling, as Howells and James had, which he sets forth with care in the essay entitled "The Novel—What Is It?" The novel, he asserts, "must deal chiefly with love, for in that passion all men and women are most generally interested"; its first object is "to amuse and interest the reader"; it is "a pocket theater" and the novelist himself is "a public amuser." It is evident from these quotations that Crawford does not care for the novel of purpose, the so-called "problem novel"; he frankly aligns himself with the romanticists, but he insists that romance must have an air of naturalness—"must be of the human heart and truly human, that is, of the earth as we have found it." We accordingly find in Crawford's novels something of a compromise between romance and realism, with strong leanings toward the romantic. He always has a good story to tell; indeed, the story is the main thing and the characters are made to fit into it harmoniously. His books are clean, wholesome, and interesting.

Other Story-Tellers.—Besides the three writers just considered, who have already become classics, there is a considerable group of story-tellers of whom the limits of this work will permit only passing mention. It will be noted that most of these wrote short stories as well as novels. Comment has already been made upon the immense vogue of the short story in American literature since the days of Poe and Hawthorne; that vogue continues with no likelihood of diminution. The growth of the magazines, the strenuous life of to-day, the business demand for economy of space and time, the national fondness for directness and conciseness, the abundance of local color in this country of sections, each with its own peculiar background—all these conditions have contributed to the popularity of the short story.

Frank R. Stockton (1834-1902), a native of Philadelphia who spent most of his life in New York as contributor to the magazines, wrote many volumes of short stories and novels.

His first short stories were published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*; later he was connected with *Scribner's Magazine* and *St. Nicholas*. He had a whimsical humor, tending at times to farce or fantasy; the most notable example of his characteristic manner is "The Lady or the Tiger?" This ingenious hoax appeared in the *Century Magazine* for November, 1882, and established Stockton's reputation as a quizzical humorist. In 1879 he issued "Rudder Grange" and other stories, which proved to be general favorites. Though he wrote several novels of respectable merit, Stockton will be remembered rather by his short stories of whimsical fancy.

Edward Payson Roe (1838-1888), of New York State, was once widely popular as a writer of mildly sensational novels in which a moral purpose was evident. Without the qualities of genuine art in plot, character-delineation, or style, such stories as *Barriers Burned Away* (1872), *Opening of a Chestnut Burr*, and *Near to Nature's Heart*, made their appeal to a large class of readers whose literary tastes were not very highly cultivated. These novels are not, however, lacking in power, and they are certainly wholesome.

Henry Van Dyke (1852—), Professor of English Literature in Princeton University and appointed Minister to Holland in 1913, has written a number of pleasing sketches and short stories, among which are "Little Rivers," "Fisherman's Luck," "The Ruling Passion," "The Other Wise Man," and "The Blue Flower."

Kate Douglas Wiggin (Mrs. Riggs) (1857—), a native of Philadelphia, is the author of delightful children's stories and other works in which sympathy, humor, and pathos are the leading characteristics. Representative stories are *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, *Penelope's Progress*, and *A Cathedral Courtship*.

Paul Leicester Ford (1865-1902), a native of Brooklyn, wrote several novels, two of which were widely read and praised, *The Honorable Peter Stirling*, suggested in part, it is

thought, by the career of Grover Cleveland; and *Janice Meredith*, a historical novel on the Revolution period. Both books are interesting studies of certain aspects of American life in two widely-separated epochs.

Owen Wister (1860—), native of Philadelphia, has written novels of life in the West and South, his best known being *The Virginian* (1902) and *Lady Baltimore* (1906). The first of these deals with ranch life in Wyoming, in which there is a love story centering about a cowboy (the "Virginian") and a schoolteacher of New England rearing; the second book takes its name from the well-known Southern cake and the part it plays in certain experiences and observations in Charleston. Wister's best short story is "Philosophy Four," a delightfully humorous satire on college examinations suggested by his student days at Harvard.

Mrs. Edith Wharton (1862—), of New York, is one of the cleverest writers of social satire in American fiction. Two of her novels, *The House of Mirth* and *The Fruit of the Tree*, are subtle studies of society problems in one form or another. The analysis of contemporary high society in its motives and ambitions is cold and merciless; the books, while rather depressing in their intense realism, are both artistic and intellectual, and are brilliant contributions to a popular and difficult phase of modern fiction. Mrs. Wharton is particularly successful in her short stories, which show uncommon skill in psychological analysis.

Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914), of Philadelphia, was a physician who comparatively late in life turned to literature. His most famous book is *Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker* (1897), a story of the Revolution; other works are *The Adventures of Francois, Dr. North and his Friends*, and *Constance Trescot*. Dr. Mitchell has also written excellent poetry.

Still other successful writers of the Middle States are Henry C. Bunner (1855-1896), short-story writer; Richard Harding Davis (1864—), author of short stories of New York life;

Agnes Repplier (1857—), essayist; John Kendrick Bangs (1862—), humorist; Brander Matthews (1852—), critic and short-story writer.

II. WESTERN WRITERS

The West in Literature.—The West has been too busy with material development to make any extensive contribution to American literature. The winning of that vast region from the Alleghenies to the Golden Gate is itself a story full of romantic interest, but it is perhaps too early for the poet and the novelist to convert this rich national inheritance into literary art. A picturesque natural background has hardly yet been transformed by the mellowing touch of tradition; western life must be older and more settled, and there must be more leisure for the cultivation of the things of the spirit, before we can expect the growth of important literary centers. No part of our country offers a greater wealth of fresh and vital material for writers; no other section is so truly democratic in its manners and its institutions. Into that immense territory people from all the other parts of the Union and from other lands as well have poured in an endless stream, and the process of social and political assimilation is still going on. The newness, the bigness, the vigor, and the freedom, of western life will doubtless in time be translated into a literature of striking freshness and virility. At present, however, western ideals are commercial; standards of intelligence are high and education flourishes, but from the state university—a significant contribution of the West—down to the grammar school it must be "practical."

Thus far it is not the new West but the old West that has appealed to the poet and the story-teller; and, indeed, this old West of Indian warfare, ranchmen, gold-hunters, and mining-camps, is exceedingly picturesque. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 was the beginning of a new era in national

development: the region beyond the Rockies was opened not only to hordes of restless wanderers in search of wealth and homes, but also to eager young writers in quest of fresh material for sketch and story. This material is abundant for the future novelist. Hamlin Garland thinks that literature in the West "will draw its inspiration from original contact with men and with nature," that it "is to be a literature not of books, but of life." The present tendencies seem to justify the prediction. Bret Harte, the pioneer depicter of western scenes, certainly drew his characters and incidents from life. Since his day hosts of minor writers for the magazines have been diligently painting the spectacular features of western life, and the moving-picture shows have not left us in ignorance of its breeziness and excitement. All this is promising, and we may confidently wait for the coming of a great western American literature.

No well-defined schools of writers have appeared in the West; Chicago is of course the commercial center, and naturally does a large publishing and bookselling business. Here is issued *The Dial*, one of the best critical literary periodicals in the United States; here is situated a great university; here are large libraries and influential newspapers. The great magazines of the nation, however, belong to the East. A number of well-known writers have lived at one time or another in Chicago, but there is no group of authors there, such as we have found associated with New York and Boston. The only western locality which can properly lay claim to a school of writers is Indiana, though in the far West, California is the home of a small group.

Before considering the important story-writers and poets of the West, mention should be made of the contribution to American literature of ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865). Lincoln was not a literary man, but several of his speeches un-

mistakably belong to literature. The most famous of these is the "Gettysburg Address," delivered at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863. The words of this short speech are familiar to all; its conciseness, simplicity, and earnestness, commend it to the heart and the head; it is an interpretation of patriotic emotion in noble diction. The Second Inaugural Address (1865) also has literary qualities, especially in those heightened parts which show the influence of Biblical phraseology. That this western lawyer, without academic or other cultural advantages, was able to write English prose of such enduring quality is to be explained in part by the direct and concrete habit of mind gained in practical experiences with pioneer conditions, so that his words represented things actually seen or felt; and in part by his familiarity with a few standard books, such as the *Bible*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Franklin's *Autobiography*, and Shakespeare's Works, which in repeated readings he had made thoroughly his own. What he wrote had, therefore, the stamp of sincerity. His style has the simplicity of Franklin's, with greater moral earnestness.

THE STORY-WRITERS

BRET HARTE (1839-1902)

His Life.—Bret Harte was born in Albany, New York, in 1839, son of a teacher in a local college. In his ancestry were English, Dutch, and Hebrew strains. Harte's father died when the boy was nine, and his rearing devolved upon his mother. As he was delicate, his attendance at school was more or less irregular; at thirteen his academic training ended. Fortunately, however, there was a good library in his home, and he began reading at an early age such classics as Shakespeare, Froissart, Cervantes, Fielding, Smollett, Goldsmith, Dickens, and Irving. It is easy to see from his own poetry that Dickens was a favorite.

At the age of fifteen Bret Harte went with his mother to California. Here he did various kinds of work—teaching, mining, tax-collecting, clerking in a drug-store, and setting type on a newspaper; more important still, as far as local color in his future stories was concerned, he served

BRET HARTE

for a while as express messenger on stages running in northern California. For a short time in 1856 he was assistant editor of the *Northern Californian;* the next year he did editorial work on the *Golden Era* of San Francisco, and here he began in earnest his life as an author. In 1864, two years after his marriage, Harte was made secretary of the California Mint, a position which he held for six years, during which he carried on his literary work, assured of a living income. When the *Overland Monthly* was founded in 1868 he became editor, and in this periodical were published some of his best poems and short stories. Friends and admirers in the East were urging him to come to New York; to these importunities Bret Harte, who inherited a restless disposition from his father and mother, yielded; in 1871, after resigning the professorship of English Literature in the University of California, to which he had just been elected, he left San Francisco for New York. He had spent seventeen years in the far West.

The next seven years were passed mostly in and around New York. Harte was a regular contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and he lectured in various parts of the country. In these tours he went as far west as St. Louis, but he never returned to California, which had furnished him

with the material for his most enduring work. This material he converted into numerous novels and short stories during his residence in the East and in Europe. In 1878 he was appointed United States consul at Crefeld, Germany, and after two years he was transferred to the consulate at Glasgow, Scotland. This position he held until 1885. The rest of his life he spent in England, mostly in London, where he had many friends among the literary folk. He died in 1902 and was buried in Frimley churchyard, Surrey.

His Short Stories and Poems.—Bret Harte's works, in the authorized edition, number about twenty-eight volumes, including novels, short stories, and poems. His literary life began, as we have seen, in California and ended in London; but no matter how far he wandered from the West, his theme in one form or another was that picturesque region of the fifties with its heterogeneous life which he knew so well. He went to California in happy time for catching the lights and shadows of a passing panorama unique in our history. "Here I was thrown," said he, "among the strangest social conditions that the latter-day world has perhaps seen . . Amid rushing waters and wildwood freedom, an army of strong men, in red shirts and top-boots, were feverishly in search of the buried gold of earth . . . It was a land of perfect freedom, limited only by the instinct and the habit of law which prevailed in the mass . . . Strong passions brought quick climaxes, all the better and worse forces of mankind being in unbridled play." This is the interesting setting of Bret Harte's best books. His novels need not be considered here, for when he attempted long plots and involved character-analysis he was not notably successful; his short stories are his masterpieces.

The story that made Bret Harte famous appeared in the *Overland Monthly* in 1868. This was "The Luck of Roaring Camp," which long ago became an American classic. It introduces us at once, after the fashion of Poe, to the main subject, without preliminary exposition. An unusual event had happened at Roaring Camp; the birth of a child had caused commotion in this rough community. Through the

death of the mother the baby was left to the camp, and they christened it "The Luck." Especially devoted to the child was one uncouth specimen of manhood familiarly known as "Kentuck," whose finger the infant suddenly grasped one day; from that moment "Kentuck" was his slave. The presence of the baby wrought a wonderful change both in the manners and appearance of the camp: cleanliness and beauty took the place of dirt and ugliness; profanity and horse-play were less popular; vast improvements in the village were contemplated; an atmosphere of civilized decency was pervading the settlement. Suddenly one night the river, enlarged by the torrent of melting snows above, swept over its banks and Roaring Camp was washed away. The next morning far down the gulch a relief party found a man and an infant:

> It needed but a glance to show them Kentuck lying there, cruelly crushed and bruised, but still holding The Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. As they bent over the strangely assorted pair, they saw that the child was cold and pulseless. "He is dead," said one. Kentuck opened his eyes. "Dead?" he repeated feebly. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." A smile lit the eyes of the expiring Kentuck. "Dying!" he repeated; "he's a-taking me with him. Tell the boys I've got the Luck with me now"; and the strong man, clinging to the frail babe as a drowning man is said to cling to a straw, drifted away into the shadowy river that flows forever to the unknown sea.

Other well-known short stories of Harte are "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," "Tennessee's Partner," "The Idyl of Red Gulch," and "The Iliad of Sandy Bar." These stories reproduce in a slightly heightened tone the local color of California mining life. Each has its element of moral idealism; for without being didactic, the story makes it clear that good is to be found in the rudest men, that even outcasts of society have redeeming virtues. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" shows the regenerating influence of a child's presence; "Tennessee's Partner," perhaps the most touching of Harte's stories, is a lesson in deathless loyalty; "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" is a

study in the heroism of self-sacrifice. Here are various groups of reckless adventurers, many of them accomplished swindlers from the East, who are temporarily dwelling in a wild mining region, where the gentler arts of life are unknown and where chance and accident are normal conditions. From these groups Bret Harte selected a few men and painted their portraits with telling effect. Such characters as Hamlin, Oakhurst, Yuba Bill, and Colonel Starbottle, one does not easily forget.

The secret of Bret Harte's success lies in the happy union of essentially different elements of character in the transition period of an uncommonly picturesque section. The older civilization came in contact with the newer; contrasts resulted; incongruities of situation and character abounded. Out of these diverse elements Bret Harte made his short stories, and opened the West to literature. The structure of any given story conforms to the principles already laid down by Poe—definiteness of effect with economy of language; the narrative begins at once and proceeds straight to the climax; the totality of impression is complete. The style is urbane, suggestive of slight, though sympathetic, detachment, and faintly tinged with irony except in the conclusion, which is usually serious, sometimes sentimental in the manner of Dickens, who was Harte's master. The American's humor is more restrained and intellectual than the Englishman's; the incongruity never borders on the grotesque, nor is it ever outbreakingly comic. The panoramic life depicted had its melodramatic features; this must be taken into account in judging Harte's short stories. At his best he is artistic; his material demanded coloring, sentiment, sensation, if the treatment was to be impressive. However highly idealized some of the characters may be, the effect as a whole is genuinely realistic.

Bret Harte wrote a number of poems of excellent quality. The best known of these are "Dickens in Camp," "The Heathen Chinee," "John Burns of Gettysburg," and "The Society upon

the Stanislaus." The first poem is a tribute to the power of Dickens over the men in a mining camp, to whom in the flickering firelight the youngest of their number

> read aloud the book wherein the Master
> Had writ of "Little Nell."

This poem, written in 1870 when Harte heard of the novelist's death, is full of melody and restrained emotion. Of the humorous verse, "The Society upon the Stansilaus" is perhaps as typical as any. Truthful James tells of the row which broke up their scientific society:

> Now nothing could be finer or more beautiful to see
> Than the first six months' proceedings of that same Society,
> Till Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil bones
> That he found within a tunnel near the tenement of Jones.
>
> Then Brown he read a paper, and he reconstructed there,
> From those same bones, an animal that was extremely rare;
> And Jones then asked the Chair for a suspension of the rules,
> Till he could prove that those same bones was one of his lost mules.
>
> Then Brown he smiled a bitter mile, and said he was at fault,
> It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's family vault;
> He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr. Brown,
> And on several occasions he had cleaned out the town.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of order, when
> A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the abdomen,
> And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled up on the floor,
> And the subsequent proceedings interested him no more.

This last line is an illustration of the kind of humor—a form of absurd understatement—in which Bret Harte is very skillful both in his stories and verse.

Occasionally his poetry shows a beauty of rhythm and a sustained intensity of passion worthy of the great singers; as, for instance, in this lyric entitled "Not Yet":

Not yet, O friend, not yet! the patient stars
Lean from their lattices, content to wait.
All is illusion till the morning bars
Slip from the levels of the Eastern gate.
Night is too young, O friend! day is too near;
Wait for the day that maketh all things clear.
Not yet, O love, not yet!

Not yet, O love, not yet! all is not true,
All is not ever as it seemeth now.
Soon shall the river take another blue,
Soon dies yon light upon the mountain brow.
What lieth dark, O love, bright day will fill;
Wait for thy morning, be it good or ill.
Not yet, O love, not yet!

American Humor.—American humor has contributed to the gayety of nations and has greatly relieved the tedium of daily life at home and abroad. Every country has its own type of humor, but it would be incorrect to draw too sharp a line of distinction between national types. American humor in the beginning was simply a development of English humor under pioneer conditions; the struggles necessary to settle and enlarge a new country gave rise to new situations which made jesting philosophers. Common sense, sympathy, an eye for contrasts or incongruities,—these made a combination out of which sprang the product called American humor. This humor, psychologically considered, was evolved as a relief for the strain and tension of life. It is a well-known fact that many of the world's greatest jokers have been at heart melancholy men; the reaction from intense seriousness is in the direction of extravagant, boisterous, and sometimes even grotesque, mirth. A nervous, high-strung, and idealistic people like the Americans must find their safety valve in forms of more or less outbreaking humor.

Some of the elements of American humor are exaggeration, incongruity, surprise, irreverence. These do not appear so startlingly in the works of what we call the standard writers—

Irving, Holmes, Lowell,—as in the productions of such professional "funny men" as Petroleum V. Nasby (David R. Locke), Bill Nye, Artemus Ward (Charles F. Browne), and Josh Billings (Henry W. Shaw). Irving's and Holmes's humor is more like the classic English kind of Addison and Steele, though Holmes's humor has a shrewdness and a sparkle unlike that of his early contemporary. Lowell's *Biglow Papers* is genuine American humor; it is political satire in dialect and has a flavor of the soil; this explains its vogue in Europe. The once exceedingly popular Artemus Ward, with his sudden and surprising turns of phrase and his calmly irreverent treatment of persons and things usually regarded as more or less sacred, and Josh Billings, with his acute comments clothed in phonetic spelling, represent American humor in its progress toward fruition in Mark Twain. Josh Billings, though not as amusing as Artemus Ward, was the wisest of the minor humorists, for his sayings were based on sound philosophy; the uncouth spelling arrested the eye, but the hard common sense of the proverb caught the mind.

Two of Ward's sayings will illustrate his manner: "Always live within your income, if you have to borrow money to do it"; "Mr. Ward will pay no debts of his own contracting" (a line printed on the show-bill of one of his humorous lectures). Two "wise saws" of Billings will serve as a sample of his method; "There iz a hundred different kinds ov religion, but only one kind ov piety"; "It is better to kno less than to kno so mutch that ain't so."

Humor, it must be remembered, is partly a fashion, and therefore subject in a measure to the oblivion which overtakes literary fads. If, however, humor be based on truth—as Billings said it must be—and expressed artistically, it belongs to literature. All the elements of American humor just mentioned are abundantly illustrated in the works of Mark Twain, our foremost national humorist.

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS (1835-1910)

His Life.—Samuel L. Clemens, universally known as Mark Twain, was born at the village of Florida, Missouri, in 1835, of Virginia ancestry. Before he was three years old his father moved to Hannibal, a Missouri town on the Mississippi thirty miles from his birthplace. In this place were spent his boyhood years. He attended the public school at Hannibal until he was twelve, when, owing to the death of his father, he went to work in a printing office. During the next seven or eight years he followed the printer's trade, going East meanwhile and working in New York and Philadelphia. At twenty-one he began an apprenticeship on a Mississippi River steamboat, and in less than two years he was a licensed pilot at a salary of two hundred and fifty dollars a month.

War broke out in 1861 and Clemens served for a short while in the Confederate army; that same year his brother was appointed secretary to the territorial governor of Nevada. The war had interfered with commerce, his occupation as steamboat pilot was gone, and the lure of the frontier westward was strong. Accordingly in 1861 he went along with his brother to Nevada; the journey and many subsequent experiences are related in *Roughing It*. In the six or seven years spent in the far West he tried mining, reporting, and editorial work on papers in Nevada and San Francisco. In the latter city he met Bret Harte and other earlier writers of the Pacific slope. After an experience of several months as a newspaper reporter in the Hawaiian Islands, and after he had been on the lecture platform a little while, he made an extended journey through Europe and the Holy Land. The letters written for a newspaper on this trip were later worked over into *Innocents Abroad*, his first book. Previous to this, however, Clemens had contributed humorous sketches to periodicals under the pen name[1] by which he is everywhere known.

In 1871 he settled in Hartford, Connecticut, whither he had gone from Buffalo, New York, where for two or three years he had edited a paper and where he had married. In Hartford, New York City, and Redding, Connecticut, he spent the rest of his life. In 1884 he became a partner in the publishing firm of Charles L. Webster & Co.; in the failure of this firm some years later he lost all his money. Like Sir Walter Scott under similar circumstances, he went to work with a right good will; he traveled, wrote, lectured; he succeeded in paying the firm's indebtedness, and at his death left a considerable estate. Three years before his

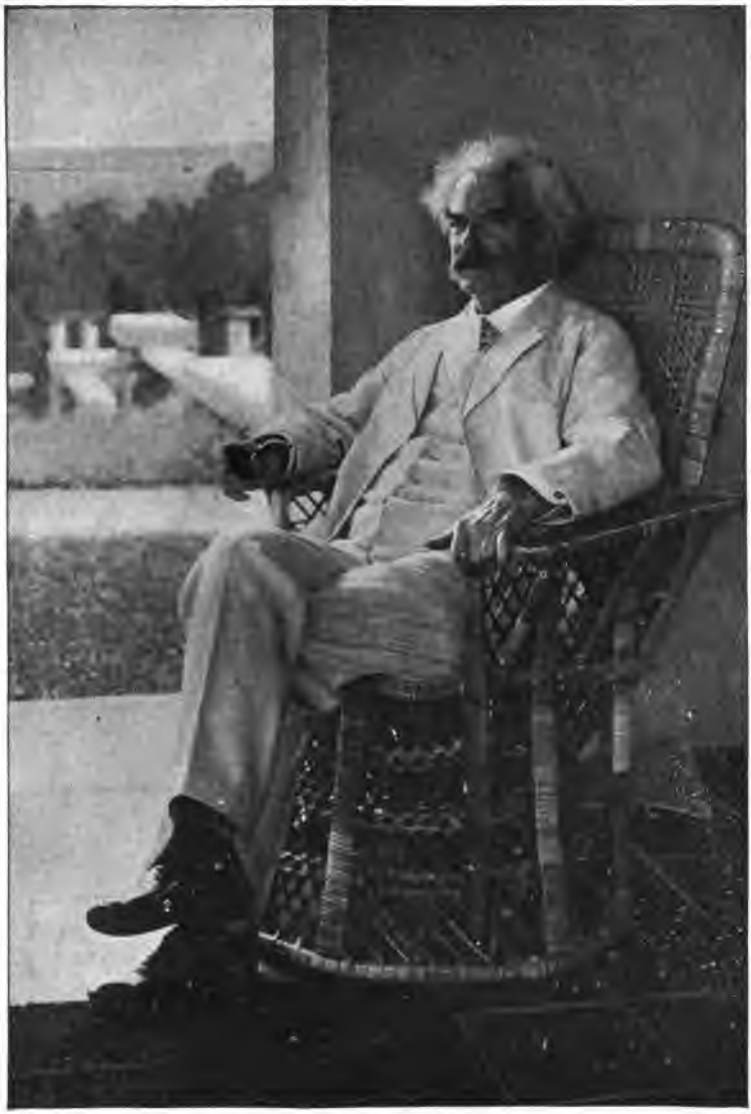
[1] The name "Mark Twain" (a river phrase for two fathoms of water) had been used as a signature by an old pilot on the Mississippi, named Sellers, in articles to newspapers. Clemens wrote a burlesque of these articles to a New Orleans paper over this pen name, which he thereafter appropriated.

death he was given an honorary degree by the University of Oxford. He made many trips abroad and was regarded almost as a world figure. The death of his wife and daughter, to whom he was tenderly attached, brought sadness to his last years. He died in 1910 at Redding, Connecticut.

His Personality.—Mark Twain had a somewhat picturesque personality. His clear-cut features, his heavy shock of hair, his drawling speech, his white serge suit, are familiar to this generation. There was an element of coarseness mingled with his artistic sensibility, such as one finds, for instance, in the Elizabethans and other writers of great vitality. His early associations with rough primitive folk on the Mississippi and in the new West will partly account for his proneness to profanity and broad jesting. Though he lived much of his life in the East, he was unmistakably a western product.

In him were to be found the contradictory traits common to humorists. On the one hand were his generous enthusiasms for the weak and oppressed, his hatred of shams, his warm friendships with sincere and manly men; on the other, his childish prejudices, his bitter dislikes of certain persons and institutions shown in many unreasoning attacks, as, for example, his belief that Scott's novels gave rise to certain feudal ideals in the South. There was a vein of deep tenderness in him, of unsuspected seriousness, occasionally expressing itself in poetic prose—as in his tribute to his daughter Jean—and in his chivalric defense of Joan of Arc. He had the temperament of the idealist with its attendant streak of mental irresponsibility; but in assuming and paying the debts of the publishing firm of which he was a member, he gave the world a fine practical evidence of his high sense of honor.

His Works.—The first writing of Mark Twain to attract general attention was "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras," published in a New York paper in 1867; before this he had edited and contributed to western papers and had won local renown as a humorist. The account of the



SAMUEL L. CLEMENS (MARK TWAIN)

vain efforts at jumping of the shot-filled frog, the incongruity of naming him Daniel Webster, and the absurdity of the remark that he shrugged his shoulders like a Frenchman when he tried to raise himself from the ground, struck the reader as exceedingly funny. Two years later *Innocents Abroad* was published and enjoyed a wide popularity; the American public had never seen such a book, and they wanted more. In 1872 *Roughing It* appeared. This is a narrative of Mark Twain's early experiences in the West and is a vivid transcript of contemporary life in that picturesque region. Other important works in the order of publication are: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *A Tramp Abroad* (1880), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), *Following the Equator* (1897). Besides these he wrote many sketches of one kind and another, but the works enumerated are his main contributions to the literature of personal reminiscence, humor, and satire. *The Gilded Age* (1873), written in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner, contains one famous character, Col. Mulberry Sellers, promoter of big schemes. His favorite remark was: "There's millions in it!"

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Life on the Mississippi*—demand special comment. These books are more or less autobiographical; they record youthful experiences and observations in the Mississippi Valley. *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are two of the best boys' books ever written. The first depicts the life of a healthy boy in a Missouri town on the Mississippi River when the author was living there; Tom Sawyer, he tells us, is "a combination of the characteristics of three boys whom I knew." He says, furthermore, that "most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my

own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine." The story's faithfulness to boy nature indicates that it was largely based on fact and that Mark Twain was himself the main boy in it. The whitewashing of the fence has become a classic incident in American literature. *Huckleberry Finn* is the story of the adventures along the Mississippi of a friend of Tom Sawyer. This is a maturer book than *Tom Sawyer*, with more unity and a deeper underlying philosophy, and is regarded by many as Mark Twain's masterpiece. Boy nature is shown in contact with great outdoor natural forces—of which the mighty river is chief—and the spirit of the story in its larger aspects is almost epic. "It is a permanent picture," says Professor Phelps,[1] "of a certain period of American history, and this picture is made complete, not so much by the striking portraits of individuals placed on the huge canvas, as by the vital unity of the whole composition."

Mark Twain considered *Life on the Mississippi* his greatest work. The best part of it is a record of his impressions when he was journeying up and down the river in the pilot-house. No other such graphic picture exists of the varied and interesting life on and along the Mississippi in the middle of the nineteenth century. These experiences profoundly influenced the great humorist; there are passages in this book which border on poetry; the humor is more subdued and the style more finished than is usual with Mark Twain. Evidently he was writing out of his heart about a memorable bit of personal history. Along with *Life on the Mississippi* should be mentioned a later work, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. This is the last of the four books on the Mississippi Valley, ingenious but less powerful than the others.

Of the other works of Mark Twain the satire on medieval chivalry, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and the historical novel, *Joan of Arc*, merit brief mention. In the first he takes off the romantic treatment of the middle

[1] William Lyon Phelps: *Essays on Modern Novelists*, p. 110.

ages found in Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*, proving to his own satisfaction the vast superiority of the modern age of science to the "days of old when knights were bold." One of his pet aversions was Walter Scott's idealistic handling of chivalry, and in this book he ridicules that institution; this is of course only another illustration of the irreverence of American humor. Mark Twain's best serious work is *Joan of Arc*. Here he appears in the rôle of defender of the Maid of Orleans, whom he ardently admired and to whom he pays worthy tribute in a series of memoirs purporting to have been written by her secretary.

His Humor and Literary Characteristics.—Beginning his literary career as a newspaper writer, Mark Twain wrote out of a varied personal experience for the average reader. There was nothing academic about his subject matter and his style; his writing had to be concrete and vital if it was to count; it had to be grounded in common sense. These are the fundamental qualities of his humor of exaggeration, incongruity, and surprise. However much he may overstate, however closely he may join dissimilar ideas, however sharp and unexpected may be the transition from the serious to the absurd, at bottom one is apt to find a grain of sound philosophy, a clear understanding of human nature, and sometimes a vein of idealism. It is not delicate humor; it is often positively lacking in refinement—outspoken, uproarious, overwhelming, abounding in daring tilts at people and things on sacred pedestals, full of irreverent jibes and spectacular burlesque, the outbursts of a modern Cervantes bent on wrecking antique air-castles.

But it is not all mad jesting; when he wished, Mark Twain could be a respectable historian and philosopher. From the whitewashing incident in *Tom Sawyer* he impresses the lesson that "in order to make a man or a boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain"; and that "Work consists of whatever a body is *obliged* to do, and that Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do." Now

and then one finds an earnest Emersonian sentiment like this: "The illusions are the only things that are valuable, and God help the man who reaches the time when he meets only the realities." The tone of the later books is in general of a higher order than that of the earlier works.

It is too early to attempt to fix Mark Twain's place in American literature. As an original interpreter of significant phases of American life—the interesting Mississippi Valley region of primitive times and the crude young West—he is sure of immortality. Much in his books that seemed funny to his own generation will not seem so to posterity; the appeal of genuine incongruity, however, is as lasting as human nature itself, and incongruity is the essence of Mark Twain's humor. We have at last come to realize that this humorist has enduring literary qualities: his style at its best is clear, simple, direct, and sometimes tinged with poetic coloring; he followed his own rule in regard to the adjective (a rule to be commended to young writers)—"As to the Adjective: when in doubt, strike it out." In the writing of English he attained artistic excellence. As a literary man his fame has steadily grown, and it is evident that he has made no inconsiderable contribution to American literature.

Edward Eggleston (1837-1902).—Among a considerable group of Indiana writers Edward Eggleston is noteworthy for his sketches and stories of pioneer life in that state. Born at Vevay, of Virginia ancestry, he spent the first thirty-three years of his life amid the scenes which he describes; he was an itinerant Methodist minister, agent of a Bible society, and an editor of Sunday-school papers in Chicago. His work made it necessary for him to travel over several states of the Middle West and urnished material for his earlier and most interesting volumes. In 1870 he went to New York to live, and here he wrote a number of historical works. Eggleston's best-known book is *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, the incidents and characters of which, as his brother George Cary Eggleston tells us, were

largely drawn from life. Other entertaining stories of early times in the region north of the Ohio are *The Circuit Rider*, *Roxy*, *The Hoosier Schoolboy*, and *The Graysons*. These books smack of the soil, and aside from their interest as stories are valuable for the light they throw on pioneer conditions in Indiana. Eggleston had the instinct of a historian and his sense of accuracy sometimes chilled his imagination.

Lew Wallace (1827-1905).—Another Indiana writer, General Lew Wallace, is famous as the author of one remarkably popular book, *Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ* (1880), which has proved as successful in a dramatized form as in the original form of a romance. Wallace was a lawyer of Crawfordsville who served with distinction in the Mexican War and the War between the States. His first story, *The Fair God*, was published in 1873; it is an Aztec romance, suggested in part at least by the reading of Prescott's histories. His later novel, *The Prince of India* (1893), was the outcome of his residence at Constantinople while minister to Turkey. These novels show the author's interest in archaeology, of which he was a careful student. While Wallace is not a great writer, he had the gift of dramatic portrayal of incidents and situations in bygone epochs and of vivid character delineation; so that what his books lack in genuine art is partly supplied by their ethical soundness and their realistic pictures of the past. In the latter respect he resembles the English novelist, Bulwer-Lytton.

Maurice Thompson (1844-1901).—Maurice Thompson is sometimes classified as a Southern writer because he spent part of his early life in the South and served through the war in the Confederate army; he was born in Indiana, however, and this was his home for most of his life. He was a man of versatile talent; he practised law, took an active interest in politics, was a civil engineer, and was for several years state geologist of Indiana; later he was on the editorial staff of the New York *Independent*. Among his prose writings the best-known work

is *Alice of Old Vincennes* (1900), a romance of the Revolution. Besides novels he wrote books on archery and other sports, literary criticism, history, and natural science. Thompson is, moreover, the author of excellent lyric poetry; his poetic love of nature is seen in such volumes as *By-ways and Bird-Notes*, *Sylvan Secrets*, and *Songs of Fair Weather*. The atmosphere of his poems and nature studies is that of Southern field and wood. The quantity and variety of his writing naturally affected the quality of it.

Hamlin Garland (1860—).—As representative of the later story-writers of the Middle West, Hamlin Garland may be briefly considered. He was born in Wisconsin, but after living for a while in the East became identified with Chicago. His distinctive contribution to American literature is the portrayal of country life in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and other western states. Garland is a realist, and his stories reproduce the somewhat prosaic life on the vast stretches of the region of which he is a native. The public first came to know him through his volume of short stories entitled *Main-Travelled Roads* (1890); other books are *Jason Edwards*, *Prairie Folks*, *The Eagle's Heart*, and *Hesper*. Realist though he is, Hamlin Garland has come more and more to mingle the softening atmosphere of romance with pictures of the daily grind of life. His loyalty to the West and his belief in the literary future of that section may be seen in this confident prediction: "It is my sincere conviction that the interior is to be henceforth the real America. From these interior spaces of the South and West the most vivid and fearless and original expression of the future American democracy will come."

Helen Hunt Jackson (1831-1885).—Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson (who signed herself "H. H." on the title-pages of her books) is noted for her ardent championship of the Indian in two works, *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) and *Ramona* (1884). She was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, but spent the last ten years of her life in Colorado and California. In *A Century*

of Dishonor she arraigned the United States government for its treatment of the Indians. The book which made her reputation as a novelist, however, is *Ramona*, the setting of which is southern California; the wrongs of the Indian are conspicuously introduced; Indian and Spanish characters are cleverly portrayed, and the local color is pleasingly reflected. The book is intense in its moral earnestness, and shows the Puritan indignation at racial oppression. Besides these works, Mrs. Jackson wrote some delightful sketches of the old California Missions and a number of lyric poems on nature, love, and religion.

Other Western Story-Writers.—The importance of the West in literature is shown by the increasing number of men and women who are putting into their pages the salient features of that section, the resources of which for artistic use are almost inexhaustible. Not all of these writers may be mentioned here, but only such as seem most truly representative. NEWTON BOOTH TARKINGTON (1869—), of Indiana, has written two novels which have attained a wide popularity—*The Gentleman from Indiana* and *Monsieur Beaucaire;* MARY HALLOCK FOOTE (1847—), who has lived in Colorado, California, and Idaho, has written novels dealing with the mining camp and the hills—*The Led Horse Claim* and *Coeur d'Alene;* MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD (1847-1902), of Ohio and Illinois, is the author of several historical novels on the settlement of the region about the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi, inspired in part by the reading of Parkman's histories; ALICE FRENCH (1850—), better known by her pen name of Octave Thanet, lives in Iowa, which, together with a corner of Arkansas familiar to her, is the setting of such stories as *Knitters in the Sun*, *Stories of a Western Town*, *The Heart of Toil*, and *The Man of the Hour;* GERTRUDE ATHERTON (1859—), a native of California, depicted old California life in her earlier long and short stories—*The Californians*, *The Splendid Idle Forties*, and *Ancestors*,—though she is better known through her later novels *The Aristocrats* and *The Conqueror;* AMBROSE BIERCE (1842—), of San Francisco, is the author of short stories of soldier life and of the supernatural, collected in the volumes *In the Midst of Life* and *Can Such Things Be?* and of a number of satirical poems; HENRY BLAKE FULLER (1854—), of Chicago, has pictured the social life of that city in *The Cliff Dwellers* and *With the Procession.*

Three later writers are FINLEY PETER DUNNE (1867—), ROBERT HERRICK (1868—), and FRANK NORRIS (1870-1902), all of Chicago.

Dunne is famous over the world as the author of *Mr. Dooley's Philosophy*, which has been hailed as distinctly an American product, although Hibernian in dialect. Herrick is a professor of English in the University of Chicago, and has written several well wrought-out novels—*The Web of Life*, *The Common Lot*, and *The Master of the Inn*—which deal with modern social problems in and around that great center. Herrick is a native of Cambridge, Mass., and a graduate of Harvard. Norris wrote two realistic novels—*The Octopus* and *The Pit*—in a projected series of three on "the epic of the wheat," when death cut short his promising career. His idea was to trace, as it were, the life of the great western cereal from sowing to world-distribution. *The Octopus* tells of the sowing and harvesting; *The Pit* depicts the selling of the grain in the Chicago Board of Trade; the last of the trilogy, which was to be called *The Wolf*, would have pictured its distribution in Europe in the midst of a Russian famine. Throughout the volumes there runs a large epic suggestion.

Two recent Western writers of adventure are STEWART EDWARD WHITE (1873—), a native of Michigan, whose stories of rugged outdoor life are *The Blazed Trail*, *The Silent Places*, *The Claim Jumpers*, and *The Riverman;* and JACK LONDON (1876—), a native of California, who writes thrilling stories of action in the open—*The Call of the Wild*, *The Sea Wolf*, and *The Game.*

THE POETS

Edward Rowland Sill (1841-1887).—Edward Rowland Sill was a native of New England, but he lived and wrote in the West. He was born at Windsor, Connecticut, educated at Yale, was a business man in California for some years, returned East and studied at the Harvard Divinity School; he then decided to devote his life to teaching; he first taught in Ohio, then at Oakland, California, and from 1874 to 1882 was Professor of English Literature in the University of California; this position he resigned in 1882 because of failing health, and spent the last four years of his life in Ohio writing for the magazines, chiefly for the *Atlantic Monthly.* He died in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1887. Nearly all his verse was first published in magazines; a small collection from his poems was printed before his death; since then a three-volume edition has appeared; and finally a complete one-volume edition has made his works more familiar to the general public.

Sill was an idealist of singularly pure and lovable personality. Though he spent most of his life in the West, he was essentially Eastern in his culture and thinking; the strong ethical sensibility of the Puritans was in him, liberalized by modern thought and softened by an instinct for the beautiful in nature and in literature. His poetry reflects the doubts and aspirations of the last century, when science and philosophy were unsettling traditional standards and setting thoughtful men adrift; and yet the deep spiritual note of his best poems has in it the assurance of triumph. There is a steady progress in artistic workmanship and vital power from the youthful poems to the last mature utterances; the restless tone of the earlier and middle periods, in which there are faint echoes of Emerson, Tennyson, and Arnold, becomes at last surer and more flexible; the moral quality is always strong, even when the sensuous verbal melody suggests Keats.

Sill's longest poem is "The Hermitage," which contains much nature description in varying meter and stanza; of moderate length is "The Venus of Milo," an exquisite production in which are blended modern wistfulness and a sensitive appreciation of the charms of classic art. The short poems, including the sonnets, are the best; like most modern poets, Sill could not sustain himself long on the wing. His best-known poem is "The Fool's Prayer," the story of how the king's jester, bidden in mockery to make a prayer for the frivolous court after the royal feast, utters so earnestly the recurring petition—

> O Lord,
> Be merciful to me, a fool!

that at last

> The room was hushed; in silence rose
> The King, and sought his gardens cool,
> And walked apart, and murmured low,
> "Be merciful to me, a fool."

Along with this striking poem should be mentioned the oft-quoted "Opportunity":

> This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:—
> There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
> And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
> A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
> Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
> Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.
> A craven hung along the battle's edge,
> And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
> That blue blade that the king's son bears,—but this
> Blunt thing—!" he snapt and flung it from his hand,
> And lowering crept away and left the field.
> Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,
> And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
> Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,
> And ran and snatched it, and with battle-shout
> Lifted afresh, he hewed his enemy down,
> And saved a great cause that heroic day.

Poems of such quality as these entitle Edward Rowland Sill to be called one of the best of minor American poets.

Eugene Field (1850-1895).—Quite a different kind of singer was Eugene Field, who has won a vast popularity by his appeal to lovers of childhood. He was born in St. Louis, of New England ancestry, spent his boyhood in Vermont, attended Williams College, Knox College, and the University of Missouri, but did not graduate; traveled abroad, and then did newspaper work in several western cities; finally in 1883 he became editor of the "Sharps and Flats" column in the Chicago *Daily News*, holding this position until his death twelve years later. In this paper first appeared most of the poetry and prose later collected in his complete works. The poems of Field are in three series—*A Little Book of Western Verse*, *Songs of Childhood*, and *Echoes from the Sabine Farm*. The second of these volumes contains the poems by which Field is best known; the third is interesting as the successful effort

of a poet of the people to adapt to democratic taste the verse of the Latin singer Horace.

Eugene Field was a genial, lovable, and humorous companion, fond of his friends, full of sentiment and sympathy, careless of his dollars, and a lover of practical jokes. He made his reputation as a writer for the humorous column of a Chicago paper, into which he daily put a whimsical array of fun and philosophy. The mock-seriousness of much that he wrote often deceived his readers, a result which delighted his own soul as well as the more sophisticated of his admirers. In standard literature old ballads and romances appealed to him, and oddly enough, the odes of Horace struck his fancy. A hobby of his was book collecting, out of which grew his habit of adorning copies of his poems in the coloring of ancient manuscripts.

EUGENE FIELD

In temperament Eugene Field was distinctly western; he loved the unconventional life of a newer and breezier section of America, and despite his New England lineage, the East was uncongenial to him. His kindly heart, his abounding love for children, his sentiment, and his bubbling joyousness, made him the happiest interpreter of the souls of the wee folk. The pathos of his verse is as prominent as the humor of it, the one shadin into the other; sometimes, indeed, the sentiment is pressed too far, in the manner of Dickens; but, after all, the line between sentiment and sentimentality is hard to keep straight. No other American poet has given us so many

lullabies or ministered so charmingly to the fairyland of the nursery. For a generation children—and grown people too, for that matter—have listened and drowsed to the magic words of "Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," been touched by the pathos of "Little Boy Blue," and made to smile sympathetically by the semi-humorous "Seein' Things at Night." In these poems of childhood Eugene Field has shown himself one of the friendliest souls in American letters; he has, moreover, brought literature and journalism close together.

James Whitcomb Riley (1853—).—Another popular singer is James Whitcomb Riley, of Indiana, the Hoosier laureate of the common heart. He was born at Greenfield, Indiana, attended the local schools, wrote verses for the newspapers, and through his successful reproduction of the Hoosier dialect gained access to the magazines. He soon became a favorite with readers; as a lecturer and as an interpreter of his poems he has delighted audiences in various parts of the country. He has published a number of volumes of verse, the most popular of which are *The Old Swimmin'-Hole and 'Leven More Poems, Neighborly Poems, Rhymes of Childhood, The Book of Joyous Children,* and *While the Heart Beats Young.*

From these titles it is evident that Riley is also a lover of childhood and knows how to put in rhyme the simple emotions of the childish heart. Simplicity and genuine humanness characterize all that he has written, whether he has in mind young or old. He is specially fond of rural life and natural men and women unspoiled by artificial conditions; for such and of such his verse is made. Humor, pathos, and wholesome sentiment form the warp and woof of his poetry, and his philosophy is of the cheerful, common-sense kind. No one has surpassed him in the lifelike portrayal of the people and speech of his own native region. Few poems in a minor key are better known to the American reader of this age than "A Life Lesson" ("There! little girl, don't cry!"), "The Old Man and Jim," "Little Orphant Annie" ("The Gobble-uns 'll git you"), "Ike

Walton's Prayer," "The Raggedy Man," and the fine love-tribute, "When She Comes Home." If there was ever a poet of democracy, it is James Whitcomb Riley.

William Vaughn Moody (1869-1910).—A poet of unusual promise and of praiseworthy achievement was William Vaughn Moody, whose untimely death was a distinct loss to American letters. Born in Indiana, educated at Harvard, he spent the best years of his life as a professor of English in the University of Chicago. He published in 1900 a lyrical drama called *The Masque of Judgment*, in 1901 a collection of poems, and three years later another poetic drama, *The Fire-Bringer*. The production which made him widely known to the general public was *The Great Divide*, a prose drama of Western setting and melodramatic plot, which was successfully played throughout the United States. A later play, *The Faith Healer*, though not without merit, has attracted less attention. In the judgment of discriminating critics, the most notable single poem of Moody is the "Ode in Time of Hesitation," written with reference to the Spanish-American War and published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1900. The dignity, restrained emotion, and intense earnestness of this poem give it high standing among those patriotic odes in which the moral note is strong.

Other Western Poets.—Among Western singers the following merit notice; several of them, indeed, in a more extended history of American literature than this would have more space. STEPHEN C. FOSTER (1826-1864), of Cincinnati, Ohio, is the author of several popular old songs—"Old Black Joe," "Old Folks at Home," and "My Old Kentucky Home"; JOHN JAMES PIATT (1835—), of Indiana and Ohio, has written *Idyls and Lyrics of the Ohio Valley;* JOHN HAY (1838-1905), of Indiana, though chiefly known as statesman and diplomat, is author of *Pike County Ballads* and other poems, and joint author of a life of Lincoln; JOHN VANCE CHENEY (1848—), of San Francisco and Chicago, has written numerous lyric poems—*Thistle-Down*, *Wood-Blooms*, etc.; WILL CARLETON (1845—), of Michigan, has long been popular as a poet of country life, his best-known volume being *Farm Ballads* and his best-known

single poem, "Over the Hills to the Poor House"; ELLA WHEELER WILCOX (1855—), a native of Wisconsin, has written much intense verse in the volumes, *Poems of Passion*, *Poems of Pleasure*, etc.; EDWIN MARKHAM (1852—), born in Oregon, is the author of one famous poem, "The Man with the Hoe" (1898), written while he was teaching in California.

RICHARD HOVEY (1864-1900), a native of Illinois, was educated at Dartmouth, became a journalist, and later taught at Barnard College, New York. He wrote much lyric and dramatic verse, his most elaborate work being *Launcelot and Guenevere* in four parts. He also wrote a number of lighter lyrics, published in the volume *Songs from Vagabondia*, to which he was joint contributor with his friend Bliss Carman, himself a minor poet of prominence. Hovey had decided poetic genius, and when death came he was beginning to get a surer grasp on his art.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR (1872-1906), a native of Ohio, has the distinction of being the only negro who has won general recognition for the excellence of his verse. Dunbar wrote several series of poems—*Oak and Ivy*, *Lyrics of Lowly Life*, and *Lyrics of the Hearthside*—in which are to be found songs of merit; the best are those in negro dialect, which have genuine melody.

CINCINNATUS HEINE MILLER (1841-1912), generally known as Joaquin Miller, was born in Indiana, but spent most of his life in Oregon and California. He had a varied career as miner, lawyer, journalist, judge, and poet. While he was visiting England in 1871 his first volume of poems, *Songs of the Sierras*, was issued in that country. He wrote many other poems on that picturesque region in which he lived and which he made familiar to American and English readers. Of his patriotic poems, "Columbus" is the most stirring and dramatic.

THE CHAPTER IN OUTLINE

I. EASTERN WRITERS

Essayists

George William Curtis, Charles Dudley Warner, Donald G. Mitchell, John Burroughs.

Poets

Bayard Taylor: Lyric poems, Translation of Faust, Travels.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892): Leaves of Grass. Rugged, individualistic poet of Democracy; irregular rhythmical chants.

Richard Henry Stoddard, Edmund Clarence Stedman, Richard Watson Gilder: Lyric poems.

Novelists

William Dean Howells (1837—): Modern Instance, Silas Lapham, Indian Summer, etc. Realist.

Henry James: Daisy Miller, Bostonians, Golden Bowl, etc. Minute analyst of character; international novelist.

Francis Marion Crawford: Mr. Isaacs, Saracinesca, Sant'Ilario, etc. Romantic international novelist.

II. WESTERN WRITERS

Story-Writers

Bret Harte (1839-1902): Luck of Roaring Camp, Outcasts of Poker Flat, etc.; short stories of western mining camps.

Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) (1835-1910): Roughing It, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Life on the Mississippi, etc.; creator of the "Epic of the Mississippi." Foremost American humorist.

Edward Eggleston, Hamlin Garland, Helen Hunt Jackson: stories of western life.

Poets

Edward Rowland Sill (1841-1887): The Fool's Prayer, Opportunity, and other poems.

Eugene Field (1850-1895): Poet of childhood; sentiment, pathos, humor.

James Whitcomb Riley: "Laureate of the common people."

Influence of magazines on literature; growth of realism in fiction and poetry; western picturesqueness and humor.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical and Social.—Roosevelt's The Winning of the West; Garrison's The Westward Movement; Turner's Rise of the New West; Channing's History of the United States; Hart's National Ideals Historically Traced; Mark Twain's Roughing It and Life on the Mississippi.

Literary.—Alden's Magazine Writing and the New Literature; Howells's Criticism and Fiction; Bliss Perry's A Study of Prose Fiction (chapters on Realism, Romanticism, and the Short Story); Cooper's Some American Story Tellers (Holt).

Howells and **James.**—Burt and Howells's The Howells Story Book; Brownell's American Prose Masters; Phelps's Essays on Modern Novelists; Canby's The Short Story in English.

Walt Whitman.—Life by Perry, Carpenter, Platt; critical studies by Noyes, Burroughs, R. L. Stevenson, and Symonds; Triggs's Selections from the Prose and Poetry of Walt Whitman.

Bret Harte.—Life by Boynton, Pemberton; Erskine's Leading American Novelists; Smith's The American Short Story; Canby's The Short Story in English; Thomas's Selections from Bret Harte's Poems and Stories (Houghton).

Mark Twain.—Autobiography; Howells's My Mark Twain; Phelps's Essays on Modern Novelists.

Eugene Field.—Burt and Cable's The Eugene Field Book, Thompson's Eugene Field (2 vols.).

A complete edition of Sill's poems is published by Houghton Mifflin Co.

SOME ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

American literature began as an offshoot from the English and has steadily developed, under the shaping and coloring influence of environment, into something like national independence. It still bears, and doubtless will continue to do so, the marks of the rock whence it was hewn, from which in the beginning gushed the "well of English undefiled." This splendid inheritance is such an essential part of us, in truth, that for generations our poetry and prose will reflect the ancestral character. But as we grow older, as our traditions accumulate and arrange themselves into a rich and varied background, our literature will become more and more distinctive and more solidly fused into a national unity; it is still a-making, and our literary material, like our natural resources, seems boundless.

In that respectable amount already made, of which this volume is an imperfect record, there are six or seven contributions which may fairly be called original with American writers: (1) The Knickerbocker Legend of the Hudson River region, as found in Washington Irving; (2) The Romance of Puritanism in Hawthorne and Longfellow; (3) The Indian in Cooper and Simms; (4) The Southern Negro in Harris's "Uncle Remus" stories; (5) The Western Mining Camp in Bret Harte's stories; (6) The Short Story of Poe and others; and (7) The Humor of Exaggeration in Mark Twain and others. There are doubtless other original phases of American literature, but these are at all events some of the most significant. These contributions to the artistic wealth of nations form an inspiring heritage for the present and the future; and what gives still more value to such a national possession is the heartening conviction, to which a thoughtful reading of our literature will lead, that America is the land of an invincible idealism.

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